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EXCERPTS FROM THE EARLIER DIARIES OF SARA FISHKIN

Translated by Eva Zeitlin Dobkin

Lecture No. 1 November 22, 1938
BACK TO THE OLD JEWISH WAY

From the very beginning, the Jewish people have been in a determined struggle with their innumerable powerful enemies. Neither the inquisitions nor the many pogroms have broken the Jew's ability to resist. Should that not convince us that it is no other than the Divine Power that is protecting the Jewish people and that only the Divine Will can perform such a miracle of miracles? Moreover, has not the Jewish Torah endured the same trials? It, too, is incessantly assailed from every side. All sorts of dogged enemies who are unable to bear its radiance endeavor to extinguish its light so that in the ensuing darkness they may follow their criminal pursuits undisturbed.../inflicting/...innumerable, endless edicts and persecutions. The baneful clergy of the Middle Ages burned countless volumes of the Torah. All of this was to no avail. The Torah continues to be extolled and studied by Jews. Its influence upon Mankind is constantly broadening. It has a profound effect upon everyone.... What strength can /those who are not believers/ muster for the conduct of their lives...so that they may walk the right path ...? /The latter part of the page is partially undecipherable./

Lecture No. 2 November 27, 1938 Kheshvan

A LOOK BACK UPON OUR PAST

When we review our rich past we must come to the conclusion that it has always been the fate of the Jewish people to be enslaved to some foreign nation. This rule holds not only in the spiritual sense but also in the areas of economic and political life. In some instances the Jews were isolated and abandoned, in sharp contrast to the kind of life led by the people around them. In the history of the world we come upon numerous moments when the morning star was about to rise for Mankind. Nations which had for many years been enslaved and oppressed by a mighty foreign despot threw off their chains and awoke to a new, free, independent way of life. Beautiful, lofty ideals are proclaimed and happy perspectives are fantasized about. Then, in those happy, enlightened moments of endeavor to correct the mistakes of the past...the condition of the Jews is reduced.... This is not an occasional phenomenon, but a frequent occurrence closely related to the annual calendar of those who awaken to the new life. The greatest happiness of the Jew is transformed into sadness. All doors are closed to him. The one and only truth appears before his mind's eye. With tears in his eyes he recalls the sorrowful past of the Jewish people. Once again he visualizes a series of cruel times experiened when nations were freed from behind unbreakable iron bars only to turn upon the Jewish masses and slaughter them or perform other wildly tyrannic acts against them...Their blood fertilized the fields. Nevertheless, our forefathers rejected with loathing...the smoothly persuasive words of the oppressors, whose devilish proposals would have led the

Jewish masses into cruel error. Thus, they quieted /stet/ the great longing of the Jew for his own land and increased his hope and faith.

Once again awful times occur, no longer in the barbaric Middle Ages but in the enlightened twentieth century. At the same time that there is general concern regarding justice and equality, the Jew is groaning under the cruel burdens of persecution. The handful of the innocent Jewish people is being decimated by pogroms. A cry of despair bursts forth when one considers that...professors attempting to devise ways to operate upon and cure all the world's ills...are responsive to the most sensitive and delicate pains of the smallest nations...and are discussing procedures for improving conditions for the blacks, but they are overlooking the oldest nation, the one that has made so many contributions to mankind.

We might possibly find some balsam for our wounds in considering the holiday of Lag b'Omer, the day closely tied to remembering the great tana /Rabbinic Sage/...who suffered so much at the hands of the tyrannical Romans because he dared to speak the truth to them. He devoted his entire life to the study of the truth and of the sublime. For many years he languished in faraway caves, buried in sand. He was the personification of eternal dedication to the study of the Torah, even under the worst of conditions... We must not fall into the abyss of despair... /but must be/ filled with the faith that Truth will triumph. /We/ must look Death bravely in the eye and fight for a for a

good future. When we take into account our entire history we hear an inner voice call out to us:

"Jew, be proud of thy name. The Jew fights for truth, and his victory is assured and eternal."

Lecture No.3 December 2, 1938
THE FATE OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE

This is the beginning of three sorrowful weeks. Before our eyes pass terrible pictures from the distant past, when the Jews experienced sad times. Old memories surface to torment the soul, press upon the heart and make a piercing impression upon us... There are those who would reorganize and rebuild our life on new foundations...Our Judaism is a historic entity which exists eternally and never grows old, remaining forever fresh...thriving and blossoming. Our history is ever new. In every generation it refreshes and invigorates all those who languish. At all times, anyone may draw upon it to quench his spiritual thirst. The Three Weeks are closely related to memories of terrible incidents in the history of our martyrdom. These are not the local persecutions with which our history is replete, but the national catastrophes whose consequences we suffer to the present day. When we consider all these tragedies...we see that they are not accidental occurrences but actual consequences of our weakness, and if we wish to rebuild from the ruins of our devastation we must employ rational means and the strength to correct previous errors. The spirit of the Torah must penetrate deeply into the organism of the Jewish people and become its national spirit, dominating all its thinking and feeling, all its actions and

behavior... The Torah must be the ray of light illuminating every path. The Torah must not be accommodated to life; life must accommodate to the Torah. Nowadays the Torah is being omitted from public life, creativity and thought. Dependence is upon personal physical powers. History demonstrates factually that the fate of Jewish life and the Jewish people is closely bound up with the Torah and that the Torah alone is the life nerve of Jewish existence. If, G-d forbid, that were to be severed, the Jewish people would cease to exist. The Jewish people depends entirely upon a foundation of godliness and spirituality. In the heart /stet/ of every Jew there must always be carried the thought of Truth, the symbol of Jewry and its existence. Everything should be done within the bounds of religion and tradition. Everything must be done according to...Jewish law and its stipulations. Only then will the Jewish people be able to continue to live and combat the grim enemies bent upon bringing harm to the defenseless Jew and removing him from the world arena.

Lecture No. 4 /Undated/
THE COLLAPSE OF MORALITY

Calmly and quietly, the Jewish people stayed in their country and carried on a pleasant, modest way of life. With sweat on his face, each individual worked his little piece of land. All of them were content and happy. They never strove to make war...or to do harm to others, to conquer other kingdoms. They spent the quiet time entirely in studying G-d's Torah, seeking to comprehend its commandments and precepts, to understand its spirit, to define man's purpose in life and his task as human being and...as Jew.

Jerusalem was known to the farthest reaches of the world as a sacred spiritual center.... The lofty teachings of the Jewish sages: love, justice, equality and brotherhood, struck a responsive chord in the hearts of the greatest and most influential personalities in the non-Jewish world. The renowned philosopher, Philo the Jew...describes the Judaic movement of that period as follows:

From the time the light of the Torah began to beam its sunny rays upon the world all other teachings paled by comparison and were overshadowed.... The influence of the Jews upon the pagan world grew from day to day. Things might have had quite a different aspect...had there not arisen a bitter antagonist of the Jews...the mighty Roman Empire, whose way of life and thought was in direct contradiction to the ... justice of the Jewish Torah. Savage strength was the Romans' idol and the sword their pride. Their banner bore a motto of brutality. In time the Roman eagle spread its wings. Woe to the people of Israel! In bondage, enslaved, down-trodden, they suffered a sad, lamentable fate when that eagle stuck its claws into the body of the Jewish nation: All the satanic Roman plans were realized. The moment the Jews' enemies desecrated the sacred Jewish shrines, the holy, purely human movement was also destroyed. All was decided by the sword, with consequences that are felt to this very day. The Jew sheds bitter tears for his Mother Zion, from whom he has been banished.... Only when we again begin to look upon our Torah with pride...will we be able to return to our true Jewish way of life and be in a position to think about restoring our historic land,

our sacred cities...Jerusalem. Then the words of the prophet shall ring out: The holy city of Jerusalem is our strength!

Lecture No. 5 /Undated/
THE MEN OF THE PEOPLE

The predictions of the holy prophets were realized. After much suffering and the forty long years of the Babylonian exile the Jewish people returned for the second time to their holy land. Once again there is evidence of happy moments in the calm way of life of the Jew. Spiritual matters once more are elevated to great heights. The Holy Temple begins to rise again upon its sanctified space. The land is revived and begins to blossom, every Jew begins to breathe more freely in the pure, spiritual air and begins gradually to forget the barbarian hands which had oppressed his people repeatedly. The ruined cities were rebuilt and Jerusalem was fortified. The wasted ground became covered with green fields and splendid gardens. Everything was changed.

Historic moments such as these demanded exceptionally great personalities. The leading men of the people of that time made the restoration of the country their first goal...putting life on a firm basis and ensuring its further existence. The nation developed gradually, in the best way possible, and the economic conditions improved from day to day. The Torah mitsvot /commandments; good deeds/ united all hearts into a solid organization. Inwardly strong, the people also enjoyed a greater sense of pride.

Suddenly, a black cloud spread over the Jewish horizon. Certain people became more and more estranged from the Torah and its...

tradition. They adopted the dissolute way of life, defamed and despised all that was Jewish and sank deeper and deeper into the pit of stupidity. Seeing that they could not realize their evil plans by themselves they sought the help of other nations. Things finally came to such a pass that there was a demand for the Jews to assimilate and for Palestine to become a Greek colony. Inhuman brutality was employed in the enforcement of the laws of assimilation. The Torah was burned in the Holy Temple and a cross /stet/ was set up there. More than two thousand years have passed since that sad time when Postomus burned the Torah. Times have changed greatly since then, as have the ways of living. During the interval, we Jews survived various kinds of periods. However, it is high time our naive masses realized how false and shameful the modern traitors are, time to let ring in every heart these words:

The Jewish people will live forever so long as there is faith in G-d.

Lecture No. 6 /Undated/
THE PROPHET

Every nation has its heroes and its illustrious men, those who have accomplished most for their people. These national figures are immortalized by all strata of the people. Everyone remembers and prizes them in the highest degree. Everyone understands the important ideas they contributed, carried out in the daily life of all Jewish people. Their names are engraved in gold letters in our history. They are mentioned with respect and awe. Everyone aspires to follow in their footsteps, to himself maintain the religious way of education in accordance with Jewish Law. Every-

one regards such spirituality with pleasure and with joy in the knowledge that we possess these sources from which anyone may draw certain results.

Those heroes ... who occupy an important place in Jewish history were shining personalities who illuminated the Jewish horizon ... By their superior knowledge they pointed out to the ignorant, uncomprehending person the pettiness in the world and showed him how to go about ordering his existence...Although theirs was an exalted aim, they, too, encountered great difficulties. It was painful to witness the terrible things the Jews had done. The general situation of the Jews was desperate. The Jewish people were politically weak and economically shattered. The existence of the government was threatened. Every Jewish heart was saddened...It was at such a depressed time that the prophet arose to preach, to admonish the people and to reprove them for the sins they had committed as well as to point out that it would be the fault of the people themselves if even greater trouble were to come to them. Of course, the lowly masses, who did not grasp the prophet's meaning, regarded him with antipathy. They also had to endure the false messiahs who preached their lying and shameful theories in the Jewish streets.

The words the prophets had uttered were realized, however. It was then that everyone understood which prophets were the true ones. In this, our own, time those holy prophets should serve to guide us. The situation of the Jews is unbearable. The Jew is hunted and tormented, treated cruelly, robbed of every human right. Suffering and insult are our daily companions. Instead

of speaking serious words to our hearts and attempting to eradicate our moral weaknesses and to strengthen our spiritual powers, our /anti-? (undecipherable)/ religionists cynically mock all that we cherish and hold sacred. Those persons who aim to be the builders of our land are really endeavoring to destroy the entire structure of national identity. As we observe part of our youth being demoralized and, in the sacred name of Zion, desecrating all we have sanctified, we must not succumb to despair, for these are but temporary phenomena.

Lecture No. 7 /Undated/
THE JEWISH SHOFAR

The voice of the Jewish shofar is primitive and plain. It does not enchant hearts with sweetness nor surprise them with fine melodies. Instead, its tones resound and, penetrating deeply, touch the hiddenmost strings of the human soul, profoundly affect the spirit, speak to the conscience, rouse consciousness, and demand spiritual reckoning. A shudder passes through the Jew's frame when he hears the very first blast. Instantly, his conscience prods him to examine and verify his annual balance. He must justify his behaviour and evaluate his tendencies and the reasons for his actions. A strictly objective divine judgment regarding his fate and future existence is then immediately issued. Everyone's portion is in accordance with the total result of his activities. The individual awakens at once from his lethargic sleep, comes to his senses and rids himself of his ordinary passions. He begins to think about the depressed state of life on earth and of how foolish and unthinking the way of life appears to be, especially for that part of the population which spends its time engulfed in the abyss of folly. The person realizes how insignificant the mundane, colorless life of triviality is, how empty and silly worldly successes are, how slight and unimportant all earthly wealth is, how futile all effort to satisfy physical wants. A feeling of remorse envelopes the individual.

The martial trumpet, with its angry, cruel voice, sets the blood boiling, expels man's divine spark and drives him to become a wild beast. The trumpet's signal serves to tell the soldier that

he must wield sword and spear against his own brother, must murder and slay and destroy. By contrast, the mild, gentle voice of the Jewish shofar symbolizes right and justice. The shofar's call serves as a command to free all slaves. The Jewish shofar does not summon and constrain towards murderous battle but to combatting evil, Satan. The blasts are intended to confound our seductive desires, to free one of egotism and self-love and of enslavement to one's own ego.

Yes, the Jewish shofar is small, but it resounds mightily. Its attractive melodies ring out loudly. Gradually, they echo and rebound. Echoes of the shofar's voice from the days of the lost kabolot hatoyre /receivers of the Torah/ resonate in the Jewish heart and shatter the hearts of all cruel men intent upon doing us harm. The sublime moment when the Salvation of the Jew will be revealed approaches and the shofar will proclaim it. This time the blast will be a mighty one and all the idols of materialism before which modern people bow will gradually fall apart. The voice of G-d will command everyone. The purpose of human creativity and action will be in accordance with His will, and Torah ideals alone will be the aim in life.

These perspectives /inspired/ by the shofar present a magnificently beautiful picture. Yet, how many times has it been manipulated? How many unauthorized persons, for whatever reason, have attempted to announce the arrival of Salvation? How great is the cost already paid by naive Jews for their failure to think? Those who were right-thinking have always seen through

the deception. From the sound of it they have always realized that it is only a lie. The shofar call that Jews are hoping for would serve to arouse enthusiasm and encourage the spiritually debased onto the ancient Jewish way.

Lecture No. 8 Monday, December 5, 1938 Kislev

T H E N and N O W

Hanukka is an unusual holiday. Among all the Jewish holidays, it is unique and unprepossessing. This holiday is rich in wonderful and beautiful remembrances which occupy an entire chapter in our history. Outwardly, the holiday appears pale and unimportant. It is simply impossible to believe that such amazing miracles as have been carved into bygone Jewish history, each one so meaningful, could have occurred. This holiday does not affect daily life to any extent. It does not overwhelm anyone or tax him, as most of the holidays do, with specific responsibilities. No feasts are celebrated.

The immeasurably significant historical events are symbolized in the little Hanukka candles alone, which recount the lengthy tale. It is also interesting and remarkable that it is precisely the anti-religious Jews--those who display a negative attitude with respect to all the other Jewish holidays, who are nay-saying and always looking for a new configuration of Jewishness and who want to build the Jewish people's edifice on abstract nationalistic foundations--that are the ones who observe Hanukka as a national holiday and do it with much pomp. They have stripped Hanukka of its sacred garb and given it a naturalistic, worldly significance as a holiday celebrating victory. They have altered its form and content and have named it the Holiday of the Hasmoneans instead

of calling it Hanukka.

However, if we examine and study the holiday of Hanukka in primary sources, characterize the psychic qualities of the Hasmonean heroes and understand the reasons for their attitude we /comprehend/ that the holiday was of a religious nature and was originally designated specifically to arouse devout, divine feelings. To begin with, we learn that the tyrannical, despotic Antiochus did not have for his aim an attack upon the property and the freedom of the Jewish people but upon their Torah. He was not intent upon limiting their political rights but upon robbing them of their spiritual wealth and upon rooting out the ethical and moral Jewish qualities and implanting instead the depraving, wanton Greek ways. His advocacy of demoralization and abasement of Jews, to the very abyss of heresy and conversion, was heard everywhere. In Jerusalem he erected synagogues in the Greek style and according to Greek taste, hoping to attract the naive Jewish youth to the gymnastic exercises the Greeks practiced and to instill the false Greek ideas and unrestrained way of life. Step by step, he soon was enforcing assimilation rigorously and persecuting all Jewish clergy, desecrating all places sacred to Jews and forcing Jewish people to bow to all the /Greek/ idols.

When we analyse and think about all these episodes and all the terrible scenes that took place, and about the fact that all the proposed plans in the misleading minds were ruined thanks to a group of religious Jews who despatched them, /we comprehend/ the absurdity and the ludicrousness of the strange phenomenon of

people who are always opposing Judaism and the Torah, for which the Hasmoneans sacrificed so much... The little candles tell us about all the miracles which occurred in those difficult times experienced by the Jews.

Lecture No. 9 /Undated/
THE VALOR OF THE HASMONEAN HEROES

The usual manner in which the Jewish nation has been represented for thousands of years is most strange. Always a part of the very life nerve of the nations, the Jewish way was not to stand off somewhere in some secluded corner of the cold North or the distant East. It was, rather, to be in the very center of the world. How wonderfully beautiful it is that the Jewish people have for thousands of years been spread throughout the countries, have lived with many nations and often been in contact with many others and had both political and economic relations with them! The Jewish problem and Jewish history are still being studied... to ascertain the underlying psychology and the basic concept. Minor examples of Jewish psychic traits: The Jew has no liking for weapons, never ornaments his person with revolvers or swords, does not amuse himself by going hunting, never challenges an enemy to a duel and has no inclination to wage war. It must be understood, however, that it is thanks to his Torah that the Jew has these high moral feelings which are deeply engraved in the Jewish heart, deeply rooted in the depths of the Jewish soul. Thus it has become a natural instinct for the Jew to abhor every sort of blood-letting. Prussian Emperor Friedrich II is said to have remarked this to the Jewish philosopher Mendelssohn when the latter asserted that statistics showed that, compared with other

nationals, Jews committed many fewer murders. Anyone familiar with the Jew's past knows how many periods of martyrdom he experienced, how much resolve he displayed during the Inquisition and at the Inquisition stake, how many human sacrifices he offered for his lofty ideals. Not only did he let his blood run, in synagogues and houses of study, for the sake of the volumes of the Torah. He not only distinguished himself there by his tenacity and his firmness of will, but even on the battlefield, when conditions compelled him to be engaged there, his pride and energy were plainly evident, as /in opposing/ Antiochus, who took it into his head to implant his heathen cult and the demoralizing, debauched Greek ways in Judah, to sully its holy cities with the heathen idols. The Greeks set about carrying out their satanic plan by fire and sword. How much trouble the religious Jews endured during that period! How their hearts wept at the sight of the moral and spiritual devastation! They hoped for a change in the political situation, but the heretics were intent upon dealing a death blow to Judaism. They surrounded caves where thousands of Jews were hidden, forced them to desecrate the Sabbath and threatened to set fire to them. Yet those Jews did not do their bidding. When a sentence of death by fire was imposed upon them, the Jews formed fighting units to oppose their cruel foes. And G-d came to their assistance and the small, unimpressive number of Jews triumphed in the fiercest battles ... The bitterly fought struggle continued for years, yet it was not the hateful fist that was victorious but the Jewish spirit. The names of the Hasmoneans were engraved in gold letters in world history, so that they became an example to everyone. And when,

in later years, the Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius was desirous of raising the martial tone of his armies he alluded to the Jewish heroes and told everyone of their valor.

Lecture No. 10 Thursday, December 15, 1938 Kislev
BACK TO THE FORGOTTEN JEWISH IDEAS

Each individual has his own feelings, his thoughts and his faith in his beliefs. There are all sorts of peoples in the world. There are nations which have no idea; there are others which do have an idea, a religion. We are an idea which has a nation. That is how Jews have always understood their fate. The Torah was in existence before the Jews were and chose them as being the most beautiful and most cultured of all nations. What good is it to argue that it was not the Torah that was first, but the Jews? The question lost its historic implication a long time ago. The majority of Jews came into being after the Torah did. We are the creation of an idea. Our life, our hearts are enchanted by its magic. By some sort of miracle our forefathers ignited a flame in our hearts that can never be extinguished. Moses' bush remains a permanent glowing in our blood. No one has the power to put it out...

And just as the prophet was compelled to follow the divine summons, so none of us can withstand the human drive. We had prophets because our whole people is prophet-like...We were brought forth by a mysterious power which yearns to be revealed. A miracle sent us forth with a sacred duty to the world: to celebrate life... Ringing in our ears is a song to drive away everyone's pain. In our heads we carry a sun to forever do away with

humankind's night. Spring is warm in our flesh; summer burns in our limbs. We are the footstep; G-d is our leader in the dark night. We are the lantern in His hand. He is the flame, we the wick. We are the pangs giving birth to the Divinity, the flash in His eye that lights up the human heart. We are the feathers in G-d's wings that are a measure of the heights to which the human being can soar.

In a small booklet entitled *In the Valley of Death*, New York, 5299 /?/, there occurs the following portrayal:

A Jewish socialist in America had the temerity to speak with great pathos about the Torah and to assert "Ato bekhartonu"/"Thou hast chosen us"/. And only there could such a one (Khayim Liberman) possess the inner freedom and great innate courage to say openly before all the world that all the modern nations were groping in the dark and that only when they followed in Israel's light would they be able to discern the right way to go.

Times change. When the same socialist first pronounced his call to the Jewish youth and bravely and openly preached the idea of Jewish chosenness he was attacked by all the Jewish socialists and all the Jewish writers who considered themselves "progressive" or "radical". But today an active socialist can get up and preach the same "tshemonota" /"benighted" ideas/ and that things seem at a pass where pure and true socialism must be based in the recognition of Israel's Torah, for the Torah alone is the bearer of every freedom, of all justice,...of love among people, and because without this Torah all socialism will be transmuted into

fascism and nazism and all sorts of similar isms. Liberman remarks that among nations the people of Israel are like unto the heart among the other organs. All other teachings have been discredited in our time, some by villification, others by bloodshed. The Jewish Torah alone retains its unsullied stature and it shall endure forever. Never has its truth been bent. And never has its light been needed more than it is today, when nations have returned to idolatry and to endowing human beings with /divine/ greatness... Let the unclean teachings be exalted to whatever degree, let /their protagonists/ arm themselves from the ground up to the clouds-- all the mightiest cannons in the world cannot shoot down a single speck of the Tablets, all the oceans of red and black ink will not smudge out a single dot of the Holy Torah. There is no "torah" /teaching/ like this Torah. Jewishness means heroism. A timorous person cannot be a Jew. We Jews have defeated all our enemies and left many burned victims behind us. Our hero is the Jew who straightened the "yarmulke" on his head as the flames consumed him at the stake. Our bridges cannot burn: they are beams of light stretched from horizon to horizon for all peoples to tread towards the day of the future. Everyone is aware of the thousands of heavy battles waged and won by the Jewish people. Everyone knows of the power and the greatness of the Jewish Torah and the Jewish people. Everything is known. But not everyone understands or can conceive of the kind of strength we Jews possess.

/Signed/ Sara Fishkin In Rubzevits

Lecture No. 11 February 27, 1939 Shvat
[Signed at the top: Sara Fishkin, in Rubiezewicze]
MY PURIM LECTURE

When we look deeper and more searchingly into the present condition of our people...there instantly, with every turn of a page, flash before...everyone's eyes the tragic...scenes..in every territory where there is a concentration of ... Jews ... At every step one hears of negative attitudes and slogans...urging murder and the rapid extinction of the Jewish people and their eradication from the world arena. And when we place these parallel with the attitudes towards and the way of life of the Jews in bygone ... days, can we firmly establish that in those former periods the Jews also endured murder and that similar, improper anti-Jewish slogans were heard ...? Unfortunately, we see that the actual truth about the past is sad ... We turn the recorded pages of the Jewish yesterday. The pictures are steeped in sadness. There were Jewish victims both on their own territory and that of others, victims who fell in the struggle for the blessed Torah. They gave up their souls and breathed their last breaths secure in the thought that Truth must and would be victorious.

And now we are seeing the same thing. The Jewish past that was filled with sad experiences is being mirrored before our eyes. We see our Jews falling and crying out for help, but no one wants to listen to those weak-voiced calls by the suffering, the weary and restricted. And when dictators and sovereigns arrive who brandish their swords and proceed with their armies and with bloodshed, all against the dejected Jew, has not indeed, the

time come for us to turn our eyes Heavenward, whence the true deliverance of our people must come? The Jewish people will not--Heaven forbid it--fall into despondency. In such a difficult time each one must take stock, ask himself and clarify for himself the question: Why, really, do we Jews suffer so, more than any other people? Are we truly so sinful, so full of evil? We bear a great responsibility: By standing aside we permit the non-Jewish spirit to reign in Erets-Israel. We must become an active power on the Jewish front and make it our business to fight for independence, for our own government and territory. How many victims have already fallen who, to their final moment, struggled with the murderous Arab terrorists? We have made many a contribution but, so far, that has not resulted in any good for our people. Nevertheless, we must keep in mind that, precisely because of our unendurable situation in the diaspora, Erets-Israel has become for us not only a question for the future but our only hope for salvation in this dark day. We are already, today, in the lowest of times. We are being driven from everywhere. Like a stepmother, each country forces us out. Where shall we go? Only our Mother Zion wants to accept us with outstretched arms. However, England has now slammed the gates to the land of our hope, shutting us out. Is not the hand of Divine Providence to be seen in this? Zion does not recognize her children because the Jews have thrown off Judaism. We are now upon the last rung of trouble. Who can tell where this will all end? If we lived according to the Torah and discarded all the foreign theories and ideologies, that would have some effect upon the configuration of the problem of Erets-Israel. We are obligated

to build Erets-Israel according to the Jewish Torah, for we are the people of DAVID SCHWARTZ. [This is apparently a reference to the Austrian Jewish aeronautics inventor (1845-1897) whose work is said to have led to the development of the zeppelin. EZD] Like him, we gave away our inventions and our treasures to strangers. Like him, we have been left abandoned and unhappy. Like him, we are being robbed and plundered and, like him, we are being ejected from entry corridors. It is now six years since the ludicrous, comic effort to be free of Jewish influence was initiated in Germany. Is it succeeding? Is it really possible to get free of everything Jews have brought to culture and civilization? Is it really possible not to make use of EINSTEIN's discoveries in physics and to discard the research into medical therapies?

The wave of anti-Semitism is now sweeping Italy. Jews are being removed from their posts. But, does it occur to Mussolini to be consistent and actually stamp out the discoveries and accomplishments of Jews in Italy? It is the Jews themselves who are being driven out and whose names are being erased. Scenes of depredation are played out undisturbed. Holidays derived from the Jews are celebrated. Now, as we mark the festival of PURIM it should serve as an example to us in this most difficult of times. We ought to learn a lesson from Queen Esther and hope that at the worst moment our time will come and the cloudy skies will light up for us.

/Signed/ Sara Fishkin, in Rubiezewicze,
Sunday, March 6, 1939, PURIM Adar

Lecture No. 12 Tuesday, July 31, 1939 Tamuz
"HAPLESS JEWISH PEOPLE!"

From the earliest times of its establishment the Jewish people was very proud to be known as the "People of the Book," a people forever engrossed in the Jewish tracts. There were always some faithful sons of the people who studied continually and showed others the right way. The people fulfilled the responsibility they bore and as soon as a child learned to speak he was taught to say "Shma-Yisroel" /Hear, O Israel!/. The proper way to conduct himself as a Jew was instilled in his young, unspoiled little heart so that later on a spring of true Jewish knowledge might come forth ... Even thousands of years ago the Jews were a people who had laws mandating compulsory schools providing genuine religious education. All Jewish fathers and mothers were responsible for seeing to it that their child received an education so that he might know about the Jewish past, be generally aware that he was a Jew and realize that it was even worthwhile to be sacrificed for the sake of the Jewish ideal and the Jewish name. Thousands of years ago, we find, everything was in a state of raw ignorance and people really did not know of anything better. Most nations were already governed by stupid dictatorship. But even then little Jewish children barely able to speak were pronouncing the divine word of G-d. The sacred words pealed from their tiny mouths. Even then those Jewish children knew that one G-d was the universal Master. To such a nation no name other than "People of the Book" was applicable.

Before us lies a document written some nineteen hundred years ago by an individual /stet/ recorded in our history as SADDUCEE .

Here are his words:

Among Jews, it is not the individuals who know a great deal and are versed in many languages who are held in high esteem. Even slaves could sometimes accomplish this. Only those are called sages who know the Torah and who know how to conduct themselves as Jews. We have lived with this Book and we have died for it. We have wept bitterly over this Book in times of intense anguish, and in the course of our many thousands of years of being in desperate situations we have found comfort in it. Youngsters have studied it and grownups have immersed themselves in it...

But what do we see today? Today we see that in the space of a few dozen years large segments of the People of the Book have become people of ignorance. The grownups, the older people, have abandoned the Book and have forgotten it. The youngsters never got to know it and the little ones do not even know of its existence. For thousands of years teaching children the Torah was the foundation of Judaism. Jewish parents aspired to have children who were great Torah scholars of renown. As for their gaining a livelihood, people knew that He who gives life will give to sustain life. In recent generations, as belief was lost faith was also lost and, today, parents must see to it that their children are provided for materially.

How to do that? By sending them to be educated. That was supposed to ensure their having a livelihood for life and was thus also to be the salvation of the Jewish community. It now appears that our rush to study may have resulted in material insurance

but it has not taken care of the spiritual at all. We now have an entire Jewish youth that is not Jewish. Each one has his own foolish, false ideal. He does not think Jewish. In most countries the educated youth, the intelligentsia, are now usually the ones assaulting and torturing Jews. The very contemporaries of Jewish students are the ones driving them out /of schools/ with iron staves. In former years, Jewish children made great personal sacrifices for the sake of Torah. Today Jewish children make sacrifices for the honor of sitting on the same bench as their raging contemporaries.

A generation is growing up that not only does not know about Judaism but also is unaware that it is written anywhere that we have a one and only G-d, that we have divine prophets. How should the Jewish children know that we have a Book? And, where is our Book? What has become of it? Was it consumed by fire? No, fire has no power over our Book; it has been tested many times but has always remained whole. Was it torn up, perhaps? No, it gets ripped apart, yet always remains intact. There is no one capable of destroying our Book. There is a legend:

Asmodeus once wished to do away with a Jewish child, a scion of a royal house, but the child was wearing an amulet which prevented Asmodeus and his helpers from having any power over him. No matter what was done to the baby, it remained safe. Asmodeus therefore conceived a satanic plan. He removed the child's nurse. Thus, without even being touched, the infant would die, of hunger.

Just such diabolical plans are now taking shape before our eyes. People have come forth who are intent upon destroying the Torah. They wish to get rid of our Book because it stands in their way. It keeps them from doing everything they have a notion to do. It is not in accord with the new problems and ways. But it is not possible for those people to remove the Book. So they conceived an idea: If they could not take the Book from the people, they would take the people from the Book. Let the Book, shrouded in spider webs and covered with dust, stand in its corner, and let the people remain unaware of its existence. And in order that the people did not realize that they were being cheated, they were fooled the way one fools a milk cow by placing by her side the straw-stuffed hide of her butchered calf.

And our people, our unfortunate people weary of their trouble and suffering, their hunger and their nakedness, unthinkingly follow those who set the tone. They take no account of where they are going, and one is impelled to call out:

"Jewish nation, whither goest? Dost know of what thou art being deprived? That which is most dear, the Book, is being taken away. Eternal life is being scooped from the souls of thy children and straw--hollow, empty nationalism--is being substituted. It cannot long endure. Hapless Jewish people, what has become of thee? Thou still dost not see the great catastrophe bearing down ever closer to thee daily, hourly, as a warning from Providence. It hangs like a dark, heavy fog over Jewish heads. We have forgotten the admonitions of our great, divine prophets."

/Signed/ Rubiezewicze. Sara Fishkin. August 2, 1939

HOLIDAYS and DAYS of AWE
/Undated/

We customarily refer to the important and exalted days of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur as holidays and days of awe. Anxiety and joy, productivity and cheerfulness, awe and trembling. We are imbued with all of these during the aforementioned great and holy days. Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are days of trial and judgment for the Jewish population. Everyone is tried and judged by His Celestial Majesty, King of the Heavens. An atmosphere of awe pervades all. Everyone is in a state of suspenseful expectation, awaiting the verdict upon the course of the year ahead.

Significant as days of trial and judgment, these sacred holidays are simultaneously the time for our annual spiritual stocktaking and reckoning. The Jew rises above his everyday earthly-mindedness. He soars in a higher, more beautiful realm, that of reverence for Heaven. He is cleansed and purified during this time... All of these elements unite to bring much solemnity and much rapture to the people, so that we have no more interesting or solemn holiday than these uplifting days. On Yom Kippur Eve, immediately after sunset, each passing minute brings closer the awe of the awaited moment for the Kol Nidre service.

In the houses of prayer there is an air of homage. The worshippers, swathed in their snow-white holiday robes /kitlen/, are in a pious mood, their minds engrossed, their hearts a-flutter with joy. From time to time a heartrending sigh from deep in someone's heart is heard or a few hot tears /may be seen/ rolling

down. Soon, soon, and how refreshingly bravely, there will ring out the melodic words of supplication to the Best Father.

Sukkoth, on the other hand, is a joyful holiday. Everything is steeped so much gaiety, cheerfulness and joy that we can no longer contain our unlimited happiness. Joyously and filled with ecstacy we proceed to the tabernacle "sukka", which is out near the open street. How the proud and firmly established Jewish holiday of the ingathering resounds! It proceeds with much happiness and enthusiasm...The exaltation in the Jewish holiday is triumphant. Good wishes are exchanged. These are the heartiest and most prayerful calls we address, with so much love, to G-d. The final day of our joyous Sukkoth is also transmuted into one of awesomeness. Our prayers rend the skies. The outpouring of prayer reaches the Creator of the Universe.

For us, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur and Sukkoth are fused into one, with judgment and joy, repentence and ecstacy...Each person hopes that G-d will be gracious and inscribe him to receive blessings and that He will forgive transgression. A new year is on its way. Everyone has fresh thoughts and plans for the morrow.

/Signed/ Sara Fishkin

Shabat, 29th of Nissan
/Untitled/

These continuing cold and cloudy days are truly becoming hateful. One wishes it would have become a bit warmer by this time and that in my sometimes sad heart cheerfulness would be reigning. It seems that these persisting cold days will never go away. One would like to have at least a few moments of gaiety. Truly! Oh, how every moment of youth is prized! They pass so quickly one hardly realizes it. How everything has the fragrance of fresh pink flowers that delight the hearts of parents! One lives through everything and is proud that one is still young and that happiness will still rule, that happiness will yet embrace the heart one is thinking of. Hope tells me the time will come when I shall be able to help my poor father and mother and give them some support, and that they will hear truly good things about me. My situation will improve and that will ease their difficult life. Yes! In the imagined dream the element of hope is great. The suffering bystander /?/ must be strong as steel to be able to witness so much hardship and still keep silent.

My present life is so difficult, so filled with torment! Nevertheless, everything lies concealed deep, deep in my heart. Everything is covered with a smile, but anyone who understands the smile seen on youthful lips ... will recognize it as artificial, will know that it tells of suffering suppressed, not revealed to anyone. The imagination is rich with solace for oneself and /reinforces/ the willingness to wait for betterment. But how good I feel when I can give a thought to someone other than

myself! That calms one's emotions. (For, does a person always think only of himself? No.) Sympathetic feelings for the other oppressed, poor individual are awakened in me. My heart aches even more for those who find themselves in a bad situation and are not able to find comfort within themselves, to lessen their suffering by hoping and waiting. It seems to such people that everything is lost, that hope is imprisoned in tight knots, that words of comfort are locked up. Their ears become deaf to them... The rays of the lightless day are blocked out by black curtains. The night is even more concealed--in mysterious, dense, hampering fog. Every moment of such a life bears witness to the many horrible personal tragedies currently being experienced.

For Remembrance! To the Devoted and Beloved Miss Sara Fishkin!
Lecture: The SIGNIFICANCE of the MONTH of ELUL
August 21, 1939

Dear "Khaverot/(Feminine) Friends!/

Year in, year out, when the days of the month of Elul approach, the truly Jewish heart is filled with anxious feelings. The unique Jewish soul acquires the upper hand over the course, crass material. And the sound of the shofar is heard, rousing each person and reminding him of his responsibility and of the purpose for which he has been sent down to this chaotic world: to undergo a minimal test. Will he be able to stand fast against the "sitre akhrey/evil spirits/? Will he succeed in being shielded from and avoiding the forty-nine gates of uncleanliness towards which he is drawn by his earthly flesh? The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth, our sages of blessed memory say. From childhood on, evil thoughts strain to rule the individual and

make him forget the true aim and purpose to which he was appointed. A person must struggle very much, must carry on a battle with his innate badness, his own thoughts and impurities, before he can succeed in placing himself on the correct level, the spiritual plane of humanity! However, the "will" of man is much stronger; "nothing stands in the face of the will" and /the outcome/ lies in the individual's own hands. He was given the choice:

Here, take this and be your own master. You are capable of raising yourself to the level of a present-day Moses if you but will it.

There is an account in the Midrash which says that when Our Teacher Moses was leading the Jews out of Egypt a king sent one of his artists to paint Moses' portrait. When he received it the ruler had difficulty believing the picture was that of the Moses who was renowned as "the poor man who pities all living creatures" for in the features of the face there were indications that by nature the individual should have been the most cruel of murderers. And that was really so, but Our Teacher Moses, may he rest in peace, changed himself, made himself over. And each one of us is capable of doing the same.

The Torah says: I have given you the choice between Life and Death. Choose Life! I gave you a world, a world full of sin. "Jealousy, lust and ambition remove a man from this world." I also gave you another concept of the world, a concept of "life" triumphant, life eternal, and what man, if he but thinks about

it, will agree to this kind of exchange: to trade shadows for reality, dreams for fact, truth for legend? Sell primogeniture for a kettle of lentils? Only foolish, stupid people are incapable of making a real accounting to themselves. As soon as the world grants them the least shadow of a smile they are immediately filled with ecstacy. They forget their real responsibilities and tumble head over heels into the pit of vain worldly delights. They have absolutely no realization that their pleasures are really not pleasurable. It is all in their imagination. The thing is, that when they do wake up it will be too late!...

And the voice of the shofar resounds. It rouses us and speaks:

"You have managed to make your way through a year of hustle-bustle and busyness. Come to a halt, take stock, balance your income and your expenditures. Are you not, perchance, turning someone else's wheel with your tether/ed animal/...?"

[The conclusion to the above article is missing. The next twenty pages contain poems, most in Yiddish, several in Polish, a number of which had been set to music and were very popular before World War II. The poems are followed by a section identified as "Part Two: Articles and Themes." The title page is signed "Sara Fishkin, in Rubieżewicze. Kislev. Wednesday, December 14, 1938." The remaining selections have been culled from this section. EZD]

SARA SHENIRER, the HEROIC INITIATOR of OUR MOVEMENT
On the Occasion of the Fourth Anniversary of Her Death
Thursday, March 16, 1939 Adar

Thousands of hearts are in grief and sadness at the thought of this simple but very highly regarded woman, Sara. Everyone has feelings of sorrow and loneliness when mentioning the name of Sara Shenirer, the initiator and founder of our orthodox religious organizations, who has now been dead a long time. This

unassuming woman was highly respected by everyone for her remarkable activity in the religious, spiritual field. She was a beacon in the dark, moonless night, leading thousands of little Jewish children out onto the right road, that trodden by our fathers and forefathers. Her proclamation and appeal were also addressed to those uncomprehending Jewish masses that were deep in the pit of demoralization and sheer blindness and surrounded by the prevailing murky atmosphere. In those dark moments for Jewish youth, when it did not have before its eyes the true Jewish goal, the command to every daughter of Jewry to show that she is conducting herself according to the Jewish Torah system, /Sara Shenirer/ succeeded, with divine guidance and undeterrred by all the thorns..., in guiding the Jewish youth who had lost their way and had the wrong aims in mind... With great effort they were able to divest themselves of these, to fight the many battles with temptation and to be victorious. They cast off from their opened eyes the deeply imbedded cataracts and began to really think about Veritable Truth. Unfortunately, we no longer have with us the mother of our movement. It is sad to be reminded that she is no longer among us. When we stop to analyze her achievements, /we see/ that they are boundless. We, as her spiritual children, must also be sure to adapt to the program and see to it that we carry out her precepts, which lead out onto the proper path.

/There follows a poem--original?--entitled "On the Anniversary of the Death of the Mother of Our Movement, Sara Shenirer"/

ON the SIGNIFICANCE of A SERIOUS ATTITUDE
Wednesday, May 3, 1939 Iyar

It has been some time since we friends all talked together in a

group. We have not had the opportunity to unite in easy conversation concerning a variety of themes of rich content and more or less to benefit by that. Finally, however, the time for talking has arrived. The cold days and the frozen feelings they bring are gone and the sun has begun to send down its warm, gilded rays. The earth has been covered with a lovely veil of green. Everything has begun to revive, is alert, alive and pointed towards the running stream of life... There are contrasts that separate summer and winter. We also encounter contrasts in life. We have before our eyes this picture of winter: Everyone's face reveals loneliness and worry. On the other hand, the pictures we see in summer are different, cheerful. Everyone is active and progressing according to her natural bent, growing according to her potential. During this spring our group should begin to move in a broader field. We should incorporate into our ranks this stream of life, develop in a spiritual sense, bring some refreshing activities into our organization that would make possible the growth of every member.

We should work on ourselves more, refrain from doing the things that are not good. At a time like this we should behave in a more serious manner and exert greater influence upon each other. At a time like this ... when edicts and trouble are raining down upon Jewish heads, when the Jewish people are seeking relief from the flood of pain rushing towards them from every side, they crave fresh air to breathe. They yearn for a haven for their wandering ships. At this time, the Jewish people are looking for a focal point. That is the problem which commands most

attention in the Jewish world ... No other nation on earth is confronted with this problem.

For every nation the center is the fatherland, the homeland. We have no country, no home. For that very reason it is doubly important for us to have a center, a place from which spiritual influence could radiate to the entire far-flung Jewish dispersion, a place where all the terrible suffering and the small joys of the Jewish masses could collect from all corners of the earth, a place from which the sound, the call, the word of leadership could emanate to the entire Jewish community, so that the Jewish people could have the assurance that all of Jewish mind and heart is concentrated in that place.

Therefore, friends, let us see to it that we correct our faults, that we cleanse our feelings and our hearts and proceed more actively to our task. Let us not dismiss it with a wave of the hand. Let us, instead, answer the appeal of our sacred religious ideal courageously and proudly and work more intensively and with greater strength, and thus benefit from the intellectual sources that are open to us if we will open our minds wide to remember.

JOYOUS SABBATH of NAH'MU, SO MEANINGFUL to the JEWISH PEOPLE
July 26, 1939 Tamuz

Only a few days have passed since we sat on the ground like bereaved persons and mourned. At the time, everyone was ruled by sad thoughts and anger as we recalled that dreadful day of destruction when the Holy Temple of the Jewish people was engulfed in flames. Each of us, without exception, mourned the Temple and

Jerusalem, our spiritual mother Zion, that brought us up and filled us with draughts of the Divine Spirit. She, most cherished by the Jewish people, is no longer. Her children remain motherless and abandoned, defenseless and poor, orphaned by her. But not by the Father, the Eternal Provider who does not forsake us, even in exile. At the most difficult of times, in the moments of greatest depression, Jewry finds consolation in the Holy Torah. The echo of the sorrowful laments still rings in our ears; yet, somehow, our hearts feel lighter and our mood is more cheerful. The question then arises: How can a sentient person alter his feelings so readily?

Following our Three Weeks of sorrowing, the Sabbath of Nah'mu, the Sabbath of comfort and joy, has arrived. It arouses feelings of happiness in everyone. Gone from the depths of our hearts is the consciousness of pain. We look upward with most beautiful hope. But, how can the feeling of sadness disappear so quickly?

If we explore the matter further we can clarify it by the following:

Before our eyes is a man who has lost his beloved child. The man's sufffering is great. He sits sorrowfully on the ground and it seems to him there is no force on earth strong enough to quell his pain. Even the comforting words of the people closest to him cannot diminish his woe. Later on, however, he gets up from the ground and gradually calms himself, despite the fact that the child he has lost will never return. Time is stronger than pain is. Time subdues the individual and gradually has him entirely

under its control. Eventually, the greatest happiness as well as the deepest suffering is eradicated, leaving only an occasional thought behind.

Such are the feelings when a Jew, knowing that "dust thou art and to dust thou shalt return," loses a child. The pain of parents who witness the spiritual death of their child is different. It is a much deeper pain. The grief is even more awful and is never forgotten. Why? Because so long as the child is alive the heartache it is causing cannot cease. The pain is great, very great. But just as great is the hope that the child will still do well. The person hopes his child will acquire more common sense and more understanding, and will re-direct himself, onto the good road.

A parable: Jerusalem has been destroyed; its sanctuaries are all in ruins; the Jewish people have all been driven from their home. However, the nation is still alive, and so long as it is alive Time cannot have dominion over it and cannot diminish its sorrow. Yes, the memory of a dead individual can be obliterated, for that which the earth covers over must gradually be forgotten. But that which is alive, which exists, can never be forgotten. Jerusalem lives and will continue to live, and the sense of consolation which takes hold of us on the Sabbath of Nah'mu is the best possible indication that we shall return to our home and once again lead our own life of nationhood. The comforting fills our hearts with fresh hope and the firm faith that our expectations will be realized. In the pure joy that is awakened in us on the Sabbath of Nah'mu we turn to the One Father in Heaven with

the hope that He will deliver us from our bitter dispersion.

Excerpt from The FIRST LECTURE by MR. YESHAYO NEKHAMTSHIK
Friday, February 17, 1939 Shvat

How beautifully the light of our Torah manifests itself and is distinct from the elemental foggy...light of the world! It is like the difference between real light and light imagined, as illustrated by the following parable:

In a room beautifully appointed with furniture and decoration of the latest fashion everything is in order except that the light which would give the room the final colorful touches of beauty is missing. When one enters the night darkness of such a room... he concludes that it must be in disorder. When he questions the householder the latter...takes a lantern and illuminates the perfect order, convincing the guest that all is as it should be.. The world may be likened to this dark room. Basically, the world is civilized, as it should be, and is inclined towards cultural advancement. However, when it comes to human relations...everything goes by the board and murder, robbery and /the spilling of/ human blood are the epitome of superior accomplishment...The robbers and murderers are uncomprehending and do not find for themselves the true, pure, exalted light. They cannot imagine the beauty of the true light, but see everything in shadow. On the other hand, even in the most desperate moments, in times of pain, trouble, persecution and truncation of the Jewish religion by its opponents, the Jews see before them the true, pure, divine light and find comfort and encouragement on their way. In passing, it might be worthwhile to emphasize and study the following

story:

A very wealthy man once called upon the Khofetz Khayim expecting that the rabbi would have a fine home, with separate, specially appointed audience rooms. When the visitor asked the rabbi why he had no such rooms, the rabbi asked a question in return.

"Do you have any rooms like that?"

He did, the visitor replied, but he could not, of course, take them with him on a journey.

The rabbi countered that he too, ... was en route and could not take everything along, even of the best.

"Why, where is your home, if this is not it?" wondered the wealthy man.

In reply, the rabbi explained that in the hereafter everything is most beautiful and most exquisite. Since the individual is always on his way there and is continuously under threat of being called upon at any moment to leave everything behind and pass to the next world, where true justice and right prevail, all /material/ things are superfluous and one does not need them.

We should learn a great deal from this /anecdote/ about what a person needs to know and how he should prepare for the world to come. What the Jew needs is the true, illuminating faith that will lead him to belief in the lofty goal of Judaism.

/Signed/ Friday Sara Fishkin February 17, 1939
First lecture by Mr. Yeshayo Nekhamtshik

/Excerpts from the undated summary entitled/
CONTENTS of the BOOKLET: THE JEWISH BUILDERS of GERMAN CULTURE

Everyone knows that the greatest figures in modern German science and culture were Jews, extremely gifted, who accomplished a great deal for Germany. Without these Jewish discoverers, inventors, philosophers, writers and social and political figures Germany would not have achieved first place among nations of culture. Who were these Jewish builders of German science, German literature, German medicine and German economic well-being? Who were the Jews who planted vineyards for the German strangers and what did they acccomlish for humanity /while/ increasing the renown of German culture? Who were all these great Jewish scientists, literary figures, economists, and statesmen who made the name "Germany" famous? The number of these Jews who devoted their energy and their talent, their genius, to German culture was large.

Heinrich Hertz, Discoverer of the Radio Waves

Heinrich Hertz, born in Hamburg in 1857, took highest honors at graduation from the University of Berlin. He had no idea that the waves /he discovered/ would be used to spread ... venom, hatred and despicable assertions against his own people, to the disgrace of the culture he represented. Within three years /after graduation/ he became Privatdozent of Theoretical Physics and, soon thereafter, assistant to the noted German scientist, /Hermann von/ Helmholtz, which was a rare privilege indeed. The young Hertz's brilliant discoveries in the field of physics astounded everyone. He conducted innumerable experiments in electromagnetics and, one fine morning, came to the conclusion

that light was nothing other than a form of electricity. And, just as Columbus did not know that he had discovered a "new" part of the world, so Hertz was unaware that his discoveries about electric waves would find application in radio and wireless telegraphy. He died young (1894), at the age of thirty-seven. His famous book is entitled "Principles of Mechanics". Since Heinrich Hertz was a Jew, mention of his name is forbidden in Germany nowadays.

Hermann Minkowski, Einstein's Teacher

Hermann Minkowski was not a native German Jew. Born in Kovno in 1864, he became a resident of Germany at a very early age. He began his studies at the University of Koenigsberg, where he soon gave evidence of ability in mathematics. In 1902, by which time his contributions to the field of mathematics had earned him renown in scientific circles, Minkowski became a tenured professor at the University of Goettingen. His work provided a foundation for Einstein's theories concerning time and space. Minkowski died in 1909.

/Felix/ Mendelssohn-Bartholdy

What German does not take delight, even today under the Hitler regime, in the sweet sounds of the concerti and /other/ compositions of Mendelssohn-Bartholdy? They are supposed to be forbidden now. Not a single German may hear the "Midsummer Night's Dream", the deeply serious and lonely tones of the "Melodies", the touching "Violin Concerto". Mendelssohn-Bartholdy is considered "treyf" /forbidden/ because of his Jewish ancestry, since he was the grandson of the famous Jewish philosopher, Moses

Mendelssohn, and the son of Abraham Mendelssohn, a banker who became a convert ... Born in 1809, Felix displayed great musical talent at the age of six, had composed a stack of works by the time he was seventeen, and at the age of twenty turned a tour of England into a veritable march of triumph... As Director of the "Musikgezellschaft" he also contributed a great deal to the development of German music. Everyone, enemies of the Jews included, prizes and respects his work.

Jakob Wassermann

Jakob Wassermann was born in 1873. His first published novel, entitled "Die Juden von Zirndorf" immediately established him in the first tier of outstanding German artists. The novel depicts a small German town where the Jews endure many troubles. Wassermann was exceedingly creative. Each new novel was an important contribution, not only to German but also to world literature. He is a writer of world renown. His works have been translated into every European language. Having exceptional insight into the human psyche, he creates masterful psychological portrayals. Wassermann was also the author of two magnificent monographs, on Columbus and Stalin and, in 1921, published his autobiography, entitled "Mein Weg als Deutscher und Jude."

Hugo Preuss, Creator of the Weimar Constitution

Hugo Preuss was born in Berlin in 1860. He continued his studies until becoming Professor at the Berlin School for Government Sciences. From that time on he devoted himself to problems in German public and governmental matters. After assuming the post

of Minister of Internal Affairs he drafted the constitution which, with few modifications, was adopted at Weimar. He had also, before the war, been for some time a Representative to the Prussian Landtag and become noted for his public pronouncements on judicial questions ... This Jew played a very important role in Germany.

Lecture No. 2 Month of Av
CONSIDERING the INDIVIDUAL

There are periods when a person feels elated.. Everything seems clear to him, logical, understandable. His heart is light as a feather. Everything in his environment is bathed in light and is alive. At such a time there are absolutely no difficult or complex problems for the individual, no confusion. Everything he notices, sees or learns is patently comprehendible. His heart is filled with happiness. Day is sweet and pleasant, and the night, as delightful as a legendary idyll. One's entire body seems fit and healthy. A strange satisfaction pervades all one's limbs.

There are other times when one feels entirely superfluous. The heart is oppressed by a variety of unanswered questions and everything seems beclouded and unintelligible. A dreadful loneliness fills all space. There is no content in anything. One feels disappointed and continuously engulfed in a sea of thoughts and emotions. There are no joyous moments. One thinks that is the way things have to be.

Actually, however, one feels and understands that some internal deficiency exists. A secret grimacing tortures the conscience. There is a yearning, a reaching for the indefinable. One doesn't

know what to do.

What is really happening? What is this stupid game being played out on psychological grounds, making our lives now dismal, now comfortable?

Just as a person's body requires food to stay alive, his spirit, too, needs sustenance to quench the thirst for living, needs something to nurture the soul, so that equilibrium may be maintained between the various corporeal and spiritual strengths and permit them to function in partnership. The human spirit is composed of a variety of powers. In the general field of pedagogy and psychology there is great concern about the problem of normalizing the individual's moral and spiritual strengths, a complex and difficult problem because of the many existing differences.

In free-style education, all the work is individualized. At its best, this type of education succeeds because everything is taught as reason dictates. Everything is done which is not permissible, which is good and is comfortable for some, but because it is not permissible others, those who go the right way, do not perceive it as being good.

This fault is especially noticeable in our times of spiritual emptiness, when the world of the soul has been completely vulgarized. If Jewish education, which draws its sustenance from the Torah, is to succeed, healthy perception and deep insight into the inner person will be required, so that the proper Torah nourishment may be prepared for each individual separately. It

is not enough simply to teach Torah to the next person. An effort must be made to permit its nurturing the individual and its bringing the person new powers that will scatter to every little chamber of his soul, to satisfy, provide strength and courage, activate the inner personality. That is tantamount to saying that "where there is no bread there is no Torah." Therefore, there is a need for deep psychic receptivity before suitable lessons can be prepared, lessons which are not only interesting and intriguing but also, and especially, nurturing. This type of education demands that the educator himself possess a sufficient quantity of Torah nourishment and a deeply Jewish outlook, for it is not a simple thing to prepare selected Torah food for each individual according to his needs. This is the meaning of "without Torah there is no bread." To educate means to teach specifically how to be able always to find the way to one's own world.

/This note is superimposed on the entry which follows it here./
On April 22, 1939 Nisan Sabbath
Yeshayo Nekhamtshik, that so important person, died in Vilna in the afternoon /?/ at /missing/ o'clock, of his illness.

Tuesday, 21st day of Sivan /The year is apparently 1938./
/Untitled/

An entire year has passed during which each child spent the time doing lessons and endeavoring to advance and benefit by what was given out. Thus, a winter and, now, half the summer are gone and it is finally time to receive one's grades. Each child's heart beats harder and louder as the last few seconds pass. All receive their marks at the same time. This child is happy, that one,

sad. In these final moments of leaving the class a variety of scenes may be observed. Everyone is glad, whether going ahead or remaining behind, but there is a deep pit of regret in everyone's heart. However, it is too late now. No longer obliged to return to class, everyone hurries off to the woods to breathe the fresh air and gather strength and energy towards the time designated for returning to school. Everyone disappears quickly ... Now the time for studies is over. All of life passes in this manner and one hardly takes note of how quickly the days and the years rush on.

Wednesday, 22nd of Sivan
/Untitled/

I am beginning to recall the time that has gone by and how my heart beat and fluttered. For me, yesterday was a day of all sorts of thoughts, about how this one and that one has finished, but my fate is different. I worked very hard and suffered more than all the others, yet I did not achieve my goal of taking the first step into life ---. I regret that very much, but am not getting deeply into such thoughts because I cannot make my way past them. My mind is in a whirl, my nerves are beginning to be irritated, and I have second thoughts. For a long time now I have not been able to answer the question, why things are as they are. Last year we were harried and mortified and we suffered a great deal. But now these people did not work hard and they finished joyously, with song and dance and whatever their hearts desired. Yesterday, at the long awaited moment of leaving the buildings, they went home to the strains of the orchestra ...

Thursday, 23rd of Sivan
/Untitled/

This is a warm day, but the wind does not stop buzzing in our ears. The time seems to me to be dragging along slowly because the work in my usual program for this day is missing. Various thoughts and ideas concerning aims and plans are floating about in my mind. All sorts of questions arise but they quickly answer themselves. The ideas are not empty. I endeavor to enlarge on them and would like to put them into practice, but that is difficult. And so the years go by with nothing. Sometimes one also does not consider things well---. One dwells upon things that are foolish and inconsequential--- and there are times when one gets lost in the abyss---. How deep it is, almost beyond understanding---! Nevertheless, there are those who permit themselves to be enticed by the beautiful song of a bird. How does it end? The bird leads the individual deep into the woods. There it alights and pecks out the person's brain... And that is <u>quite understandable</u>.

Sunday, 26th of Sivan
/Untitled/

It happened this evening, at sunset, when it was getting dark outdoors, when the stars began to emerge and light up the dark Sivan night, when the street was filled with people enjoying themselves, happy with everything that pleased them, full of goodwill. Outdoors there were heard the attractive sounds of people singing melodies. It was at that time that I sauntered out of the house with a pail, to fetch water. As I did so I became aware of an unusual scene. Near the river all was quiet. One heard no one. Everything was asleep, deep ... in an unexpected silence. Was it really so quiet? I simply could not believe

it. I look around. All is still. But, yes, as I look around ... I hear the strange voice of living things calling out from beneath the protection of the waterflies /Stet. waterlily pads?/ under which they lie hidden. The river rushes along. It seems not to be a river but a sea. How wonderful it was to observe all that, incredulously, and see the entire picture! The stars are reflected in the water moving along. They light it up and lend it final ornamentation and color. Then night fell and the various incomprehensible sounds of whatever was there fell away from my ears. Once again an odd silence prevailed all around.

Wednesday, June 29th, 1938 29th of Sivan
/Untitled/

Today arrived beautifully adorned, bringing warm air for man. This was the day the Polish people took back possession of the sea. As for every other nation, this would benefit them greatly. The day they had long awaited had finally arrived. The holiday was celebrated with great pomp in our town today ... Strange thoughts were going through my mind at the time. Thousands of years ago, when the Jews were a nation and everything was under the wings of Jewish rulers, the sea teemed with trade and business. Those splendid times for the Jews are no longer. My eyes filled with tears as I watched. At such a time, when we find ourselves in dire straits, when we have nothing we can call our own, everyone is estranged from us. This is a very painful problem. But, what can one do? With the help of G-d we shall have everything back. Everything will return to us, as in the days of old, because that is as it should be.

Monday, July 4th, 1938 4th of Tamuz
AN UNUSUAL STORM

A wonderful scene manifested itself today. It quickly made everyone sad. Everyone was simply overcome with gloom.

The morning was warm. The sun sent down its pleasing beams. There were many people about because, as usual, today was a market day. Everyone goes, looking to earn something. The sun was gradually swallowed up by a mass of clouds. Darkness was in the eyes of everyone. Suddenly something happened which has never before occurred. There was strange turmoil in the air. Earth and sky were whirling. Everyone began to run, for each additional moment outdoors threatened greater danger. People wrung their hands and cried, and one could hear /some say/ that this was the end of the world; everything would be swallowed up by the approaching gale. Everyone strained to watch which way it would go. A streak of blackness in the unusual configuration of a long tail covered the sky, where there was not a single bit of blue to be seen. Blackness and cloudiness everywhere. The stormy sound of the hurricane, which came rushing along and did much damage to many residents, echoed in our ears. People discussed it. One person used one word, another used a different one, but all were talking about the same thing that everyone was so interested in, for it looked truly awful. Everyone was sad, because no one knew what would happen next. /The storm/ went sideways, leaving many destroyed objects behind. She broke many dozens of trees that have no ... fruit on them. The trees are broken in accordance with the /storm's/ ordained life span. Branches are stripped of their bark and everything lies about in

an odd sort of lifeless faint. It is thundering. Weird sounds ring in one's ears. Unusual, unfamiliar flashes of lightning, difficult to look upon, streak past everyone's eyes lightning-fast. An odd dislike on everyone's part for this great, wonderful storm is quite noticeable. A torrent of rain pours down, lasting for what seems like many minutes because no one wants to be out in it. Thus it goes on for an indeterminate time. All of a sudden, in the middle of the day, such simply indescribable darkness!

But--God be thanked! The storm passes. It has done a great deal of heavy damage. The light of day begins to return and the populace grows somewhat more cheerful, /although/ ignorant of what has happened at home. One says:

"Just so long as the children are still alive---" Everyone is dreadfully worried. Yet there is one comfort for all: Whatever God has wrought must be considered to be for the best. And thus the tragic, frightful, heartbreaking scene is ended. It is followed by another downpour of rain and much threatening cloudiness which subside quickly, leaving behind wet footsteps in the form of a lightly falling rain.

I shall never forget this scene, for this was the first time in my life that I saw it. And for that reason it is very wonderful.

Friday, 8th of Tamuz
/Untitled/

The days and the years rush by swiftly and my heart, instead of being happy, is heavy. My years are mounting to a high number... One cannot be happy, because the times do not permit it. More and more sad news reaches us about Erets Israel and the situation prevailing there. The beautiful skies on the horizon of the Jewish land are darkened by innumerable clouds. The hatred and enmity towards the Jew pursue him. He is tormented here, there and everywhere, in every country. Very sad. Jewish blood is expendable, almost like water. Rivers of it pour out in fresh spurts. Everyone is cut to the heart, pained. One's limbs are numbed. One has difficulty breathing ... Everything is in vain. Everything has the same smell. It is not at all pleasant. If we did have one place, the last one, that was good for the Jew, things are the same there, too, and even worse, than everywhere else. Alas for the sacred land where they felt certain the holy feet of the great scholars and the gaons would walk! The earth, deeply wounded, groans. It is moist with tortured blood and countless Jewish victims are to be found there now. Anti-religious individuals have taken command of the country and they have sinned against it with their undesirable ways, and so on. It makes one very sad.

July 11, 1938 Monday, 11th of Tamuz
/Untitled/

There is hubbub and commotion outdoors. This is a market day. It drags on until the long summer day fades. There is no quiet. The buzzing in one's ears is the same all day long: the conversation of the gentiles ... the loud scraping noises of their

scythes ... On a day like this there is not a single moment of rest from standing up continuously, for small pay, in someone else's business, and the extent of the exploitation on the part of the /woman/ owner is simply indescribable. There are moments during the day when my hands and my entire organism are numbed and I can scarcely remain on my feet. However, this is a consequence of my situation. I am obliged to toil for strangers who have complete rule over me... I deeply deplore this fate that befalls me at present but I hope that G-d will compensate me with happiness for all my suffering, that G-d will help me in everything, for I am still young. "Bimheyro beyomeynu. Omeyn selah." /May it come to pass quickly, in our time! Amen./

June /July?/ 17, 1938 Sunday Tamuz
/Untitled/

It is hot outdoors. The warm days of Tamuz prevail. Everything is full-grown. When I scan the periphery of our shtetl everything looks wonderful. The grain is ripe and the stage of turning the fields into empty land has been reached; the time for that has arrived. There is a deep sigh in everyone's heart and gradually the happy, laughing mood is gone. Emptiness is beginning to appear everywhere and little by little summer is moving off. In a few months the time of less pleasant seasons will have arrived. /Now/ everything is green except that the fields are yellowing. One's eyes perceive all sorts of colors. How beautiful such a picture is! The sheaves stand lined-up in rows on the field, looking from afar like so many soldiers. The summer is indescribably beautiful, but it will gradually, imperceptibly disappear.

July 23, 1938 Sabbath Tamuz
/Untitled/

When I look more thoroughly into the labor of the peasants and into man's actual situation generally ... and characterize every aspect of their domestic lives and how their daily work is arranged /I find/ that it begins promptly at sunup and ends at sunset with rushing to get the grain into the barn as speedily as possible. The work is done quickly, with neither delay nor change of procedure. They see to it that everything is in good order both in the home and everywhere else. They hurry, working breathlessly while their sweat pours down like water, for the weather is hot. The temperature is high and quite unbearable. But, with a thirsty smile on their lips, they do their work joyfully and are happy that it is hot so they can get their work done /The end of the sentence is missing./

July 27, 1938 Wednesday Tamuz
/Untitled/

I am sitting in the orchard under a blue sky covered with pretty clouds. The surrounding atmosphere is clear and clean ... The trees tremble ... In their green ... leaves the strength for the many-colored apples of various varieties is concentrated ... All sorts of thoughts and explanations are going /through my mind/. But, suddenly, I take control of myself and begin to ... think of consequences ... It is wonderful, because a whole row of answers begin to appear. ... A strange quiet reigns all about. The only thing to be heard is the rustling of the leaves by the lightly blowing breeeze. ... The heat beats down and the hot sunbeams fall upon everything ...A very light rain sudddenly interrupts..

July 30, 1938 Sabbath Tamuz

This week passed quickly. The weekdays hurried by and the dear, blessed Sabbath arrived at last. In the afternoon we went to our meeting room to hear a lecture by Mr. Nakhman Nekhamtshik.

The Gemara tells us the following:

Thousands of years ago, during the time of King Solomon, the Jewish people decided to build a holy temple. King Solomon called together all the great men of the time ... to consider the important matter of how to construct the gates ... After long moments of deliberation ... a man named Nikanor announced that he would do what was necessary. And so it came to pass. After a long period of waiting the gates for the Holy Temple were ready. Nikanor then boarded a ship to travel to the great and splendid city of Jerusalem. When he was out in the middle of the ocean a great storm came up ... The ship was about to sink ... The captain, not knowing what to do first, came upon the idea of throwing part of the heavy load overboard. Perhaps that would prevent the ship from going down. Whereupon he threw one of the two parts of the gate into the sea. Nikanor protested, for a long period of work and much money had been expended, but he did not prevail. He was heartsore.

No sooner had the gate been thrown into the water than the storm on the raging sea worsened and grave danger threatened. The captain declared that it was necessary to throw the other half of the gate overboard. Nikanor grew very sad. He tore his garments, prayed and pleaded with the Lord of the Universe for an end /to the storm/, so that it would not be necessary to cast away the

gate. Suddenly a Voice from the heavens commanded that the storm be held back, and it abated.

This parable can be applied to the Jewish people. They were given the Holy Torah, which is divided into two strong gates, the Gate of Learning and the Gate of Worship. No force is strong enough to break them asunder. But what happened? The Jewish people threw away the Gate of Learning and the storm over the crushed people increased. They are obliged to endure even greater suffering because of what was thrown away. There is no cry of repentence, no return to the right way ...

Sunday 31st Tamuz
(Continued from yesterday, Sabbath)

As though it were not enough that things were so bad, that the people were in the worst stages of regression, the Jews began to sin against the second holy gate, the Gate of Worship. Very sad. For three years now Jewish blood has been flowing in our Holy Land, Erets Israel, where terror and murder reign. The country has been completely terrorized. Arab bombs keep falling. The blue sky of the Jewish horizon is beclouded and the cries of pain and the terrible groaning of those who have fallen in defense of the sacred ground are heard constantly. The hearts of the murderers have turned to stone. The crocodiles ... break into the Jewish cities mercilessly, so that /the situation/ is bad. England, that emancipated nation, cannot prevent the instigative gangs from committing the fearfully tragic murders.

/A Parable/

There was once a very wealthy man whose one and only son had a

great gift for painting. People paid a hundred zloty for a single one of his paintings. One day he told his father he was going out beyond the city to where there was a tall tower on a high hill. The father did not wish to consent to that and opposed his son's proposal. Finally, since he could not dissaude his son, the father decided to accompany him. It took them a long time, several days, to arrive at their destination and climb the tower. The son began to paint a picture of the lush green hill. After several weeks, the painting was finished. When he looked at the right side from a distance, the painter did not find his painting pleasing. The farther back he stood from the right side the uglier the painting seemed to him. The thought occurred to him: begin over again, from the very beginning. But, no! He reconsidered and decided to look at the reverse side of the painting. The farther he stood back from it, the more beautiful the picture appeared to him.

As he watched his son move farther and farther backwards the father suddenly realized that his son was in great danger. One additional step would plunge him to death from the great hill. What did the father do! He seized the paintbrush and smeared paint across the picture, ruining it. The son rushed over to his father, crying:

"Father! What have you done? This has cost me so much expense and labor, and now you have destroyed it!"

"Yes, that is true," replied the father. "If you live you will paint even more beautiful and splendid pictures. The way you were

going, you would have fallen off the hill with your very next step and been killed."

This parable may be applied to the Jewish people. In the beginning, they went the true way, along the right side. But they saw it as unsatisfactory, for it was forbidden to do certain things. They began to desecrate the name of G-d and to go the non-Jewish way, along the wrong side, where everything was permissible, and found that pleasant. Thus, gradually, they were sinking into the dark depths of the netherworld. Then the Father--G-d-- took the brush He holds and made a swath with it. Thereupon a fearsome spilling of blood began in Jewish streets. Attacks upon Jews were organized and many families fell victim. People began to seek satisfaction /in/ a variety of despicable pleasures that block the view of his horizon to the individual. And so, things are bad. All doors are closed to us, Jews, and our sky is dark. All sorts of moaning and cries of pain tear from the hearts of the unfortunates. The picture they present is tragic. This is a very sad moment, filled with much suffering and torment. But everyone's hopes are on the one G-d.

August 1, 1938 Monday 1st of Av
/Untitled/

This past Friday we began "counting" the nine sad days during which everyone seems to feel as though he had been a Jew since ancient times, when the Temple was still standing and the Jews prized it. But then they sinned and sad times came upon the Jewish people. That was thousands of years ago, when the Jews had their own home and could go to the Temple to pour out the

ache in their hearts. What happened later on, however?

King Nebuchadrezzar of Babylon destroyed the Temple. He laid siege to the holy city of Jerusalem until it was covered by ruins, a sad hour for the Jews. Once again their lovely, divine melodies were gone and others, sad and sorrowful, took their place. Deep groans, from weeping over the Destruction, rise from every Jewish heart. Sad times began for the people and the sorrowful songs did not cease. They are still heard now, for the condition of the Jewish people is even worse today. We continue to hear the same moaning and cries of pain. The situation is catastrophic, and who can tell what the morrow will bring for the Jews?

Sunday 9th of Av
TISHA b'AV

Everyone's heart is sad on this day and sadness is all around, wherever Jews are concentrating on remembering and mourning the Destruction of the Holy Temple and are considering our deplorable situation. Everywhere the question is the same: Why must the Jews endure so much, boundlessly, endlessly? Why so much suffering, continuing from olden times, when their sacred place, their spirituality, their divinity were taken from them? Each individual composes himself /while contemplating/ these all-embracing, unanswered questions, for that is how it is and that is the will of the Divine Lord.

On this sad day every Jew thinks about where he stands in this world and about the responsibilities that devolve upon him because he bears the name of Jew. More or less, each one can see in his mind's eye the tragic picture of the burning Temple and

/can hear/ the prolonged weeping, the ceaseless moaning and the cries of pain of the Jewish people standing by and seeing the flames of the fire encircling the Holy Temple. It is as though the collapsing walls and beams were saying to the Jews: It is all your fault and no one else's. It is you who are burning this great, splendid edifice with your own hands. You have set fire to it. You have done it all. It is all because there was no harmony among Jews, no unity. Unfounded enmity was rampant among G-d's people, and because of that trait we have been punished with the burning of the Temple and with dispersion for such a long time.

And who is to blame for that? No one but ourselves.

July 8, 1938 Sunday Av
/Untitled/

Gone now are the days of sadness during which each person mourned the Destruction of the Temple and poured out oceans of tears about the bad situation of present-day Jewry. But although those days are past the sorrow remains in the heart of every Jew as he cannot help but observe the wrongs being done to our oppressed people. Each day has its misfortunes. This one today and that one tomorrow. Uncounted /numbers/ are sacrificed; blood does not cease to seethe and flow in the streets of Erets-Israel. The situation is catastrophic. It is simply impossible to describe such calamities, such tragedies, such damage.

G-d alone knows what will happen, what the morrow may bring. Everyone is deeply concerned with this question that is so pain-

ful for the Jews. It is impossible to hold off the instigative gangs. That is bad. The times are going badly for the Jews and that is very sad.

July 14, 1938 Sunday Av
/Untitled/

Everyone is beginning to be sad at heart at the thought that summer is going away. The fields are now empty. The days are shorter and it is really becoming quite noticeable that the nights are lengthening. The months disappear quickly and one year after another rushes by and, so far, nothing has been accomplished. There is nothing new. My good fortune has not yet arrived. It is locked in a lonely tower and is resting, but there is an echo resounding in a variety of melodies /promising/ that the time will come when everything will gradually begin to be revealed and truth will emerge triumphant. A person must hope to the One G-d, who is merciful to man and can do everything good for the deserving individual. For everything can change and everything can happen by the grace of G-d. And how happy I would feel if I were actually able to put my thoughts and plans into practice and benefit from /my/ talents! That would indeed be very pleasant.

July 20, 1938 Sabbath Av
/Untitled/

In the world as a whole at present, things are not quiet. There are various signs of unrest not only here in Poland but in all of Europe ... Preparations are being made for internal restrictions and for strengthening of ... borders surrounding countries. Everyone is depressed ... by the news that has reached us of this unrest. Who can understand the sudden internal reinforcement here and ... the unexpected sight of trucks speeding by all day long, laden with secret, unrecognizable cargos? No one cares to really think much about the matter, for this is a moment when considerable danger threatens.

July 23, 1938 Thursday Av
/Untitled/

I am sad at heart. My nerves get excited when I listen to the unfair things my mother says. Yes, that is actually how it is. One must suffer so long as one's heart can absorb and endure it. The unkind things she lets pour out upon me are so wrong. Yes. I really must not talk or write this way...but I love her as much as I do myself. At the moment strange thoughts and explanations are emerging. The time will come when everything will begin to be revealed and truth will triumph. Right now I feel depressed and weary. Sadness grips me and I am immersed in these matters which prevail over everything ...

Friday, 24th of Av
/Untitled/

A long night has passed, a night of traveling, of darkness and of sleeplessness. Finally ... day came. The sun began to rise and scatter its warm rays ... After this journey amounting to many

kilometers I arrived in Shtayfts. It was early. When the clock struck seven I was already at my destination. Weary and tired from the long journey, I rest and rejoice in the fact that I am at my sister's home. I ride into town. Little by little the attractive homes and larger buildings come into view. The streets are noisy. People are going in all directions. There is much hustle-bustle. People are hurrying and rushing about. It is obvious that these are lively folk.

Sabbath 25th of Av
/Untitled/

The precious, holy Sabbath Day has finally arrived. I am not at home, but here in Shtayfts. Far, far away, separated by many kilometers, I am spending this day in a different city ... The two of us /sister and I/ are talking, discussing our life at home. Both of us are delving deeper into our present ways of life, which lead to different shores and routes. As we converse we feel the intimacy of sisterly love and are aware of the pleasantness of being together and of having an actual conversation. We are aware of the blood flowing between us and circulating in both of us, and so on. These uplifting moments of getting along well with each other make us happy.

And thus one half of the day went by. Later, after the noonday meal, we went to visit with some girls who form a group for sociable discussion of a variety of topics and problems. It is indeed very important.

After walking for quite a while and traversing several streets we are at the house. All the girls greet us. We talk, discussing

several vital, general Jewish problems concerning Jewish youth. Then we arrive at the cultural themes on the agenda ... which leads to the development of further discussion among us. While that is proceeding I notice something unusual. One of the friends takes up a mandolin and begins to play it--on the Sabbath. I am surprised by this scene and my thoughts become confused. Immediately, the subject of desecration of the Sabbath arises and right there, before everyone, the talk turns to explaining this to the girl. She promises not to do that again. Thus our words find their way into her heart and are acted upon.

August /July ?/ 28, 1938 Tuesday Av
/Untitled/

Several days have now gone by since I arrived here in Shtayfts. The time went quickly, some of it spent in sessions with the group of friends. They were exceptionally impressed with my presence here and with my talk, in which I pointed out to them how wrong and misguided their thoughts were. I clarified a number of questions previously incomprehensible to them. The time was well spent. The five days have gone by quickly and today I am preparing to go home. It is already twelve o'clock. I am packing my bundle. I really do not want to go. I am most reluctant to leave Shtayfts. I say goodbye to my faithful friends and we start out on the journey. We have a long way to go. It is very hot. We ride along slowly and after seven hours of leisurely travel we arrive in Rubiezewicze. I find everything the same, with life going on as usual ...

Thursday, 30th of Av
/Untitled/

I am already at home. And once again I see the usual sort of

thing; the actual picture is unchanged. There are great differences to be noted between the city and the village. These differences are truly quite apparent. Here, in our shtetl, the spreading heresy and assimilation are not very noticeable. The awful sin of keeping Jewish shops open on the Sabbath is not usually committed here, nor are all the other terrible transgressions one might encounter at every step in the city and which some other person might consider acceptable. He is so immersed in the abyss of foolishness and sin, his entire being is so immersed in this world and its pleasures that he is uncomprehending and thinks it is right to conduct himself as he does. One's heart aches when one really thinks about it and recalls the appalling mistakes those hundreds of people have /made/. They do not listen to any truthful explanations and refuse to hear the appeal of the honest persons who wish only to pull them out of the mires that are covered over with wild grasses. They refuse to understand the reasons for the great suffering endured by the Jews. Each free-thinking person has his own attitude towards the world, his own mistaken reasoning which leads him into the abyss and keeps him from understanding. All his thinking tells him that he is right and that he is a virtuous person.

August 10 Sabbath Elul

/Untitled/

Everyone's heart is heavy as he thinks about the present moment. The fields are already bare. One can feel a different, confining atmosphere coming on, with new winds, and the like. Little by little the sun hides among a variety of dull shadows. Its

pleasant, warm, spreading rays are not so readily noticeable. It is swallowed up by a multitude of clouds. By now the cheerful, melodic birdsongs are no longer heard. Their echoes slowly fade away and are silenced, ended now for many months to come. Desolation reigns all about. Ah! How long is it since everything was in all its developing glory? And now that is all past. Sadness is everywhere here.

August 11, 1938 Sunday Elul
/Untitled/

It is several weeks now since the children went back to the public elementary school. How difficult it is for them to understand these matters, the pain the pupils endure from each other! How their hearts are hurt when they think more deeply about suffering youth in this diaspora, in the hands of strangers. True, they do, actually, survive it. I still cannot forget about it, and /the sounds of/ that same Polish school still ring in my ears. How insignificant it all seems to me now, how inexplicable! I recall and remember everything. Instruction in Polish has begun again and Jewish studies are completely forgotten about. One sees everything being studied in other languages and nothing studied in Yiddish. But, one does become accustomed to all things, this included.

July /August?/ 14, 1938 Wednesday Elul
/Untitled/

Over now is the long, two-month period during which we spent our time in the orchard, under the open sky and surrounded by clean air and fragrant grasses and flowers. How precious these moments have been! The sun always cast its glance upon the cold morning

grass and sent warm rays to the fruits the trees were bearing. The trees were enveloped in a green veil of leaves and the pretty apples which gave off a fine, juicy fragrance. Thus has passed the free time of keeping watch over /the orchard/ and at the same time absorbing some spiritual sustenance by reading magazines, newspapers, brochures and the like. How quickly it has gone by! It cannot be recalled ... this good, delightful time of warm summer. By today the trees are bare, the homelike temporary dwelling--the straw shack--is breaking down. Leaves cover the ground. They lie spent, yellow. Their transitory life is now finished. Everything has been gathered together. The harvest lies in a heap, each fruit nestling against the next. The trees stand bare, stripped of their dress and ornament. The orchard has been left sad and lonely, powerless to continue existing. This very day we are abandoning the shack, our pleasant summer-y summer residence, and are taking everything with us. We are going away from the orchard we have guarded such a long time. But I am cut to the quick. I cannot part with the trees. I take leave of each leaf separately and hope it will have the proper sustenance for next year so that it may flourish and grow and multiply. We are leaving and shall not see them at all during the winter.

Goodbye to you, trees.

/In a box at the top of the next page and decorated with two little flags is the following sentence:/

Today,in Erets Israel,our bestleader, Rabbi Sheliekhl Shapira, was killed. May his memory be blessed.

Sunday, 25th of Elul
ROSH HASHANA EVE

This is the last day preceding Rosh Hashana, a day to stand before the High Court. We have been preparing for the holiday since early in the morning. It is a day of work and endeavor ... with everyone resolved to usher in the holiday in as beautiful and splendid a manner as possible. The house is cleaned and great pains are taken to give everything the special look required for a holiday. Everyone gets ready. It takes all day. Finally, night falls. The sun has long since set. The work is finished. Rosh Hashana Eve has come to an end and the Holy Day itself, with its profound awesomeness and dread, has arrived. Father dresses in holiday clothes and hurries to the synagogue. The spirit of holiday is everywhere. Candles have been lighted and the entire house decorated. There is an air of holiday, of deep spirituality in every corner. Everyone notices, is aware that the Holy Day has come. The burden of work has been cast aside ... Everyone is in a happy mood on the way to the synagogue. The same spirit of holiness prevails there. Everyone stands enveloped in his white tallith and is absorbed in a long, pleading prayer to the One and Only G-d.

Monday, 26th of Elul
THE FIRST DAY of ROSH HASHANA

This is a warm day /but/ the sun's rays are not very hot. There is an emptiness all about: The grain has been harvested and the leaves are withered and yellow. Sadness everywhere. The atmosphere of approaching autumn is dominant. Every Jew is making haste to arrive at the synagogue as soon as possible. His thoughts are not happy ones. Passing by the house of prayer you

hear the supplication of the people there. All of them are engrossed and deep in thought about the special prayers for the Rosh Hashana service. The shofar's pleading penetrates deeply into the heart of each individual. Everyone sheds warm tears as he expresses what is in his heart. Each man is cloaked in a white tallith or a kitl /white linen robe for solemn occasions/ which are a reminder of the day of his death and of reckoning as to his place in this world, and serve to caution him at every step:

"Bethink thee, man. Turn away from the bad deeds which lead to undesirable results."

After the service everyone is filled with pure thoughts ... A multitude of Jews pours out of the synagogue. Each one is nicely dressed and carries a Mahzor /special prayer book for the High Holy Days/.

Now it is after the meal. Once again everyone leaves the house to ... hurry to tashlekh /a waterside service/. Once again fervent prayers rise heavenward to the King of Kings, blessed be His name, and pass through the seven heavens before they come before the Lord Himself. The banks of the river are lined with Jews who have come to do the bidding of G-d. Each one hopes that the streaming current will immediately carry away all his transgressions ...

Later on, the candles are blessed. Their little flames spread their light to pervade the entire home and everyone is happy.

However, no one knows what is being /inscribed and/ sealed for him up above, what particulars are on the list for him for the year ahead and how that year will be spent.

Thursday, 29th of Elul
TWO DAYS PAST ROSH HASHANA--ALREADY!

The Holy Days of Rosh Hashona, marked by the slowly-paced petitioning prayers of the Jews, have now gone by, to be followed at once by the first of the ten days of penitence each person must observe. He must strive to improve his conduct during this time in order that G-d may forgive him his transgressions. For, on Rosh Hashana, G-d opens the three volumes in which are inscribed the three categories of persons: holy, evil, and mediocre. The holy ones /tsadikim/ are immediately inscribed into the book of life, while each evildoer is sentenced to the kind of year he deserves as determined by his degree of worth. The mediocre wait the ten days so that G-d may see whether they are conducting themselves better. If so, He forgives them their sins and they are inscribed for a good year. All of this is in preparation for the day of Yom Kippur, when everything is decided on high.

September 1, 1938 Sabbath 1st day of Tishre
TODAY IT WAS VOTED THAT THERE WOULD NOT BE WAR

Today's date is a very happpy one and will be remembered by each individual for a long time, because for many weeks there have been reports in the press about the annexation of parts of Czechoslovakia by both Germany and Poland, separately. The newspapers printed various articles and discussions about Hitler and about plans to acquire the territory and to control it. The moment everyone awaited finally arrived and it was learned that

the Czechs had agreed to give up what was being asked of them. They ceded Dubrowohlynia /?/ without a battle, without going to war.

Everyone is very glad peacefulness will continue to prevail in the land and that there will be no fighting. Prior to this time the situation appeared really catastrophic. It seemed only a matter of minutes to the outbreak of war. But, G-d be praised, it did not come to that. Oh, what G-d can do, turning such uncertainty back to the situation that existed previously! And today the hour of calm struck. The territory Poland demanded was taken from /the Czechs/ and flags were displayed in celebration of Poland's victory and of the fact that war did not break out.

For the Jews, however, there is no improvement. Who can tell what the new year will bring the Jews? Antisemitism is very popular. We are being choked wherever possible and the situation is not a happy one, remaining very much as it was before. In Erets Israel, similarly, the situation continues to be bad. Thus there is suffering, and it is not good to suffer.

Monday, 2nd of Tishre
/Untitled/

A week has disappeared. A week has passed. My heart is very sad. I simply cannot forget the calamity which has occurred ... It was on the eve of Rosh Hashana, on Sunday, August 25, 1938, in Elul, that our best and most active leader, who was most devoted to our organization, was killed. He took the first measures for its founding and expended much effort to build it into a reli-

gious movement. All his striving was towards a single goal: to educate the young female generation in the direction in which it really ought to go. And that is what actually occurred. Several years went by during which he was with us, taught us, carried on important conversations with us. From these we profitted a great deal and became informed about numerous problems and questions concerning Erets Israel, the Jewish people, socialism and so on. The time came, however, when he went away from us to study ... We were left alone. Then someone else began to carry on the work and, G-d be praised, we rose to a very high level.

During the next period of his life, having completed the /course?/ and learned the work, he traveled to Erets Israel, for he had labored to reach his goal: to be in the Holy Land, in Erets Israel. Unfortunately, that did not end well. He did make excellent progress and acquire a fine reputation, which he had longed to do. But how sad we became and how many tears we shed and are still shedding, how suddenly the blood in all of us turned cold when we read in the newspaper of two victims in Erets Israel. One, SHOLEM SHAPIRA, a twenty-four-year-old young man, a /shokhet (ritual slaughterer)/ recently arrived from Poland, was killed by Arab murderers at the Western Wall. The news reached us Wednesday night. Everyone is very troubled that such a person, such a young, flourishing tree should be cut down and have to go from the world into the black earth which covers him. Oh, how the heart is cut, as with a knife, upon reading it! How inconceivable things like this are! A highly regarded person, with very mature thoughts and much knowledge, a person with

quickened blood in his flourishing body and the will to live and to contribute to the knowledge of others, he had founded a religious school there and been the teacher. I simply cannot believe what has happened and would wish that my ears could hear that it was not true. But how is that possible?

/Flag/ SHOLEM SHAPIRO /Flag/

/PLEASE NOTE:

Page 74 follows page 72./

Tuesday, 4th of Tishre
ON the EVE of YOM KIPPUR

At last the day of the Eve of Yom haKippurim is here. It is a day during which every Jew prepares for the Holy Day, a day of work as well as of thought and quiet prayer to G-d to grant him a livelihood, good health and whatever else is required to go on living and providing for all his needs and his household expenditures. Every Jew is concerned and thinks about asking for a good year for the entire Jewish people, for improvement in the terrible situation of the Jews. And when he returns in the evening each Jew enters his home and, all together, /the family/ eat the final meal before the fast day. Everyone endeavors to get to the house of prayer promptly. The candles burn with lovely little flames which light up the entire house, now left solitary. Everyone is hurrying off to the synagogue to pray to the one G-d.

Wednesday, 5th of Tishre
Y O M K I P P U R

Early in the morning everyone hastens to the synagogue. With a breaking heart each individual reflects upon the great importance of this day. As he enters the house of prayer his heart trembles at the thought of the dreadful situation of the Jews in Poland, in Erets Israel and everywhere else in the world. The newspaper carries reports of new historic events of great importance which have taken place before our eyes. The fate of peoplehoods and of nations has hung in the balance during these awesome days. The entire world faced the question: Peace, or war? But now the world is breathing more freely. Still, for us, Jews, this does not spell any improvement at all. The bloody struggle, a struggle in which the Jews are exerting all their moral strength, has

lasted nearly three years. Each day brings new victims, brings names of just-perished martyrs who have given their lives ... /several words illegible/...in the Jewish cause. Two hundred twenty-four sacrifices. How much innocent Jewish blood has gone into the soil of Erets Israel during this year, 1938! ... On this day of judgment there will be memorial services for all those who have fallen in this struggle for our land. The number 224 is a terrible one, a number which not only casts fear and sorrow /upon us/ but also obligates us to something. On this day, therefore, every Jew feels deeply involved and is praying both for himself and for the entire community and is asking G-d for betterment of the Jewish condition and for an end to the suffering.

Sunday, 9th of Tishre
ON the EVE of S U K K O T H

The eve of the holiday of Sukkoth has finally arrived. Everyone is busy in the house and wants to participate in the housework... and undertakes a separate task. Father is busy setting up a sukkah /tabernacle/. Thus, filled with noise and din, the day passes and evening arrives. The house is delightfully neat and a wonderful sense of peace prevails. The spirit of holiness is in every corner. Father leaves for the synagogue.

Monday, 10th of Tishre
The FIRST DAY of SUKKOTH

This day is rainy and cold. The coming of autumn is evident everywhere. The fields all around are empty, denuded and bare. At this moment, when the atmosphere outdoors is one of sadness and loneliness, when the harvest has all been taken into the barn, the holiday of Sukkoth arrives. /Final sentence is incom-

plete./

Thursday, 13th of Tishre Second Day of Half-Holiday
We have arranged a Sukkoth celebration for this evening.

Looking back two thousand years at the nature of the times the Jewish people were then experiencing ... they were driven from their own land and home. They were declared to be undesirables. The Jewish people took their wanderstaves in hand and have been wandering for two thousand years now without any noticeable change for the better. For them, life continues in the same pattern.

This is the second intermediate day of Sukkoth. The first two days of the holiday have passed and we are looking forward to the final ones. For this half holiday we have arranged an evening entitled The Found /?/ Daughter. We have been preparing for a month and expect to present it tonight. We have been working hard to get ready, for such things do not come easily. The time has gone by, everything is ready and we are expecting a crowd. Unfortunately, however, the weather is not nice. It is raining something awful. It is getting late and there is not much of an audience. Our mood is sad, for after all our hard work we aren't having the kind of success we wanted.

For our part, the evening went through very impressively. The players were very well received, but they had no one to perform for ... The number of tickets /sold/ was very small. We made eight zloty. However, we are all comforting ourselves with the thought that we are not to blame. Thus it is over, leaving an unpleasant feeling because of the way it went so far as finances

are concerned.

Thursday, 20th of Tishre
/Untitled/

The holidays have passed, along with the very interesting customs by which we Jews observe them. The lovely, warm summer days have disappeared. At this time all of nature has a changed aspect. The fields all around are naked, bared of their crops. The leaves have already fallen from the trees. The tiny breeze blows ever so lightly. Little by little happy moods and melodies are lost. A wave of sadness pervades all. The sky has clouded over. The autumn months of rain and mud draw near. Everyone's spirit is saddened by reflection about the approaching future. The pleasant rays of the sun have been extinguished /stet/. They bring less light now. Different impressions are noticeable at this time. People are variously affected. Everyone has his own thoughts. The holidays are over now, all of them passing in a single month. All of the holidays are rich in content, each one individually having special importance. Each one has much meaning, from which one can learn; one can benefit a great deal by introducing this /knowledge/ into actual living.

Sunday, 23d of Tishre
The memorial meeting for our leader, Sholem Shapira, was held today.
/This entire entry was written as one paragraph./

At this time, the situation of the Jewish people is desperate. Everyone is personally concerned. Each one paints the tragedy of Jewish life in the blackest, most awful colors. Oh, how much sadness when one imagines all the terrible persecutions and tortures which occur both inwardly and outwardly as life progres-

ses! The Jews are blocked everywhere, strangled and plagued at every turn. The Jew suffers everywhere. Oh, it is bad. But then we turn our glance to that faraway region where the hot rays of the sun warm the fertile earth saturated with all the innocent Jewish blood /of those/ who fell in the struggle for the land of Erets Israel. Among the sad newspaper reports we read from that country, there is also one which startles our eyes. It contains the dreadful words which tell that among the martyrs who fell for Erets Israel is the one who is both holiest and our best friend and leader, Sholem Shapira.

It is difficult, very difficult, to describe his achievements and the profound thoughts he hoped to bring to fruition in practical life. For a young man like that, effervescing with youth and the desire to live and to accomplish something good for all of Jewry, it was difficult to put down the foundations for a religious organization, for between one step and the next there lay thorns. Between one span and the next there stood iron walls which had to be split with a strong fist before the long-imagined goal towards which he strove could be reached. When he fell, this best and most active of martyrs, he had already managed to accomplish a great deal in his short life, which numbered twenty-four years. Therefore, a meeting is to be held, dedicated to the memory of this person who was a true idealist, a true authority. He urged the benighted, uncomprehending Jewish masses, the heretics who were building Jewish Erets Israel in the wrong way and thus had brought about the tragic, incomprehensible, bitter Jewish situation now existing, to go the true Jewish way. These murderers,

these Jewish heretics created the atmosphere that brought suffering to the Jews. For Erets Israel ought to be established in conformity with the religious way, upon a foundation of Torah, in accordance with the desire of G-d. Unfortunately, everything is happening contrariwise and that is the reason we are suffering so, the reason we are giving up our best leaders to G-d, the reason the innocent who are agitating for going in the way of G-d are being murdered. Tonight, at eight o'clock, we are having A MEMORIAL MEETING for our assassinated best friend and leader, Sholem Shapira. We shall all gather in the house of study. Rabbi Shmulevitz has been invited from Shtavfts to attend the memorial meeting.

Sadness reigns everywhere as the meeting begins. An account is read in which the writer describes the things /Sholem Shapira/ accomplished for Erets Israel and how his activity increased to a higher level from day to day. The acts inspired by his devotion to Erets Israel were very significant, simply indescribable. Then, on a sad day for him, on an accursed, dark day for us, when the Jewish sky became overcast and beclouded, he went to his eternal rest in the black, lightless earth. Weeping and moaning burst forth from the hearts of the mothers, expressing their great love for him. The graves were rent asunder. The frightful weeping echoed to the skies. How difficult it was for them to leave the burial ground, to part with this father who had left thousands of Jewish children orphaned and in bitter straits! How difficult it was to express everything about him and to discuss his deeds. No one can forget. No one can dry the tears. No one

can find any comfort. In each individual's heart there is a deep wound. And who knows how long it will take for that to heal?

The next to speak is Mr Nakhman Nekhamtsik, who also described the sad Jewish situation. Just what it is and what the reasons for it are is discussed. With sad hearts /Sholem Shapira's/ creative deeds are discussed. The audience is very interested and greatly admires the speaker's account and his ability to make everything more understandable. After many long minutes he ends his talk.

The address of Mr. Shmulevitz follows. A wave of profound thoughts flows from his Torah-speaking lips. The audience listens. He describes the days of Jeremiah of old and what it was like to be a prophet to the Jews. He explains the basis for the present Jewish suffering. He speaks of Erets Israel and of Sholem Shapira. After speaking at some length he stops and the cantor recites a memorial prayer for the deceased. Everyone breaks into a sea of tears. Nothing is heard but the melody made by the sobbing, the weeping. As the cantor ends, everyone is moaning and sighing. Mr. Shmulevitz concludes his talk, attempting to comfort the people and telling them they must not give way to resignation and despair but must hope that G-d will help them and that there will be an end to their troubles. But: The full measure of belief in G-d must reign in each Jew, and he must not lose that faith. The blessings the prophets pronounced upon the Jews will then be fulfilled.

With this, the memorial meeting comes to a close.

October 25, 1938 Tuesday Tishre
/Untitled/

The Jewish children do not find the time they spend in the elementary school particularly delightful. They are suppressed, told that in a Polish school they are undesirables. Unfortunately, there are no Jewish schools here in Rubiezewicze, so /the children/ are fated to go to "their" /Polish/ school. However, by now that is quite unbearable. They are at the point of desecrating the Sabbath; the children are being commanded to carry their books and to write on the Sabbath. This is very inconvenient for the children. The same holds for my brother. He has suffered a great deal, like all the others. Last Saturday night, therefore, our mameshi /mommy/ took him to Shtayfts, where he will study at the yeshiva. We are very glad we took him there, on the night of Saturday, the 22d of Tishre, October 22, 1938. And may G-d grant him health and willingness and bring him up in such a way that he will be able to follow the right road: to study the Holy Torah in accordance with the will of G-d and grow up to be a light to our entire family.

Sunday, 30th of Tishre
/Untitled/

Quite different ideas hold sway over me at this time. Different thoughts and images are being painted in my mind. There are various ways out, but it will not be easy, and nothing is accomplished without definite, gradually developing intention and energy directed at getting closer to one's goal. Each individual puts forth effort in accordance with what she finds that will be to her liking and help satisfy her wish. And this week, with the

help of G-d, I begin the study of Hebrew. May the Almighty grant that I will be successful and will continue to forge the chain according to my ideas so that, G-d willing, they may be materialized in actual life. I shall devote all my energy to this task, knowing that in time it will yield desirable practical results.

Tuesday, 1st of Heshvan
/Untitled/

The daily agenda are different now. The way of life is different. Everything has changed and everything will change.---Every change brings definite concrete results in practice and is reflected in the life of the home. Everything demands brains and thought---awareness and direction. For whatever he does or thinks everyone has his purpose and his main interest, his thesis or antithesis which has either already been clearly stated or which is known of in theory only and is still to be expressed or accomplished.

The days are shorter now. Autumn has arrived. The weather has changed. A rainy season is upon us. The lovely moments of summer have suddenly disappeared, almost without our having taken notice. One must become accustomed to everything, to good periods as well as bad ones.

November 6, 1938 Monday Heshvan
/Untitled/

I do not know why I am sad today. The sadness is spun out like a long, black thread, and the /illegible/ penetrates into every limb like a fine rain and encircles me as with a black cloud. Autumn. The wind escapes the night's pointed, long, black hands /Stet/"fingers?/ and seeks a hiding place. The wind sees everything. It looks through the narrowest crack, through the merest cranny. It creeps in through the scarcely noticeable tiny hole and with its eyes, thousands of eyes, sees everything, everything. May the four walls of my room therefore protect me from autumn melancholiness. May the sparkling eyes of the night burn

with /Stet./ away the?/ blackness on my face.

A muddied peasant wagon drags along on the poorly paved street. /The occupants are/ enveloped in warm clothing which protects from the cold and the evil wind ... There is an expression of hopefulness on the autumn-y faces. Uttered prayers tremble among the white hairs of the beards. Open eyes under teary eyelids look towards the black ceiling. On the backs of the fallen leaves the wind has brought me two thoughts from faraway lands, and by means of the speeches of great personalities it has planted sadness in my soul and fertilized it.

November 9, 1938 Wednesday Heshvan
ON the OCCASION of the FIFTH ANNIVERSARY of the DEATH
of the RABBI of LUBLIN, BLESSED BE HIS MEMORY

Several years have gone by since the moment when the unforgettable Rabbi of Lublin took leave of us, years that brought great shock to Jewish life, terrible enmity and many changes into the collective life of the Jew. Nevertheless, /the rabbi's/ name will continue to be mentioned with the same warmth as it would be if he were alive /?/. Wherein lies the secret of his unforgettableness, the secret of his popularity? Everyone endeavors to find his own explanation for /the rabbi's/ appeal, the basic characteristic of his great personality. What constituted the power with which he captivated us? What did he have which swayed us, compelled our attention and enchanted us? Wherein lies the key to his exceptional influence over us despite the period of time which now separates us from him?

He commanded our attention not only because of his oratorical ability, his brilliant rise, the grandeur of his plans, the

greatness of his contributions, the ingeniousness of all his efforts. Everything the Rabbi of Lublin created bore the stamp of greatness. His every undertaking gave evidence of extraordinariness and breadth. Everything he created was intended to be brought into use. Breadth of vision is the dominant characteristic of his personality. Breadth of movement is the distinguishing mark of his works. His comprehensive approach to every problem, the sweep and purposefulness, were so great that he dragged us all along, took us with him.

He came to us from a small village in Galicia. But even there, in that small village, he was weaving great plans. In the quiet of the evenings in that shtetl some wide-ranging projects were developed. There the first plans were born for returning hegemony over Jewish life, with its physical and moral suffering, to the Torah. His heart bled as he took note of the thorn-strewn path of the scholars. He realized that the tragedy was not only that of the students at the yeshivas; it was also the tragedy of orthodox society. His mind worked feverishly on how to bring about a revolution in the thinking of the Jewish community. Mustering his inventiveness and great enterprise the creator began his work. Finally, despite many difficulties, he succeeded in actualizing his ideas. He demonstrated the kind of initiative that contains within itself unusual scope and productivity. Many, many generations have gone their way, but no other such winged imagination found expression. And it was not for nothing that he aroused so much recognition, enthusiasm and excitement. His creativity and scope were alluring ... Unfortunately, the creator

is no longer among the living. His name, however, has been immortalized, for great contributions, epoch-making works, do not go into oblivion. Creative deeds of scope and breadth of movement live forever.

November 10, 1938 Thursday Heshvan
TODAY BEGAN STUDY OF HEBREW

And on this day, praise be to G-d, we began the study of Hebrew. We have begun to delve deeper into the Old Testament. We are finding it very much to our liking. And we really ought to be familar with the sacred Jewish language, the Sacred Tongue. In it we sense the passage of the periods in the life of the Jewish people, their entire history, which spans thousands of years. It seems to us we are actually seeing it, as though it were real, as though the Jewish past were being renewed, with the same course, the same troubles and tortures we are experiencing now. And how dreadful are the moments when we learn how the Jewish people were enslaved to Pharoah, subjugated by barbaric hands and murderous hearts! When we complete the study of such a segment tears come to our eyes as we realize that all those things are happening here. The dejected, broken people are being tortured; by the thousands, we are being expelled and harried and tossed about, declared superfluous and unwanted.

Wednesday, 16th of Heshvan
/Untitled/

Oh, how terrible it is to picture the present dreadful situation of the Jews! It cuts everyone to the heart, which weeps when one looks into the Jewish newspapers, where detailed news of the pogroms, the horrible and tragic scenes taking place on the

streets and roads of Germany, is printed. Take, for example, the picture of the young boy, the seventeen-year-old /Hershl/ Grynszpan, who quieted his conscience by assassinating a German ambassador /stet/ to take revenge for all the innocent blood that had been spilled. With a revolver he fired three shots into the /victim's/ heart and, as a result, acts of terror are being carried out in Jewish streets. Nor does that suffice. Synagogues and houses of study are being put to the torch, dozens of scrolls of the Law are being torn up, Jews are being evacuated /stet/ from their homes and places, and blood is actually flowing like water. The newspapers note and discuss protest actions on the part of countries that oppose the murdering which has been carried out on the soil of Germany. They are of the opinion that the cultural status of Germany has been brought down as a result of the violence being done to the Jews. It is very sad.

Imagine the picture: The Jews are being driven out of there hungry and naked. They are not permitted to take along a single thing. With just the clothes on their backs, bloodied, sad at heart, they flee wherever their eyes take them. When they arrive at a border they are not permitted to enter the country. Neither here nor there. The only choices are to jump into the water or into the fire.

The Jewish sky is beclouded at present and the air is saturated with groans and weeping. Rivers of tears are being created by the many unfortunate Jews. Little children are being butchered. Their young flesh is being cut up and they are being stomped on

by the feet of barbarians who are, at the same time, stomping upon their own honor by permitting such horrible, indescribable events to take place.

Sunday, 27th of Heshvan
/Untitled/

Cold days have arrived. The wind is blustering. The rain pours down. Both outdoors and in the house all are lonely, sad and troubled. Sadness is in my heart and I am deep in a sea of countless and contradictory thoughts ... In these Heshvan days everyone is preparing for the long drawn out winter. People lay in various supplies, do whatever they can. Everything is for the future. Everything that exists seems to possess this power to understand about preparing for winter ... One feels the cold and /anticipates/ the period of frost, of icy, all-enveloping winds and the reign of snow. For Autumn is slowly moving on, slowly going away as the season gradually comes to an end.

Saturday, 3rd /?/ of Kislev
/Untitled/

The days of Hanukka are already approaching. We shall be living through a period of another kind. A person going through a new period thinks about it. He is dominated by different thoughts and feelings and much change takes place. Everything has its limits and each /season/ has a different base and pace in which the power for what it does lies hidden. Winter thus finds expression in its period of cold, frost and snow ... The strength of summer, on the other hand, lies in its warmth, in the fine summer days which drag on like weeks and in the lovely warm rays which spread out over the entire globe. But those moments have by now been long forgotten, for it is a long time since they

departed. We are entering weeks and months of long-lasting cold, which we are now already experiencing.

Wednesday, 14th of Kislev
/Untitled/

For several days now it has been cold and we have had frost. /The weather is/ very severe. It is dry outdoors, not wet, but the cold is grueling. There is a very strong wind raging fiercely. Everything points towards snow and yes, it has finally torn loose. THE FIRST SNOWFALL. It is coming down slowly in snow-white, jewel-like flakes. Everything is being covered with a white veil. All the beauty of summer is gone and there is a thin layer of snow on everything. Here and there, a bit of green does show through. Everyone dreams of the time that has gone by and ponders the step-by-step transitoriness of everything. All things go away, but they are not forgotten, and who can say what the future, the /year/ 1939, will bring? Now, again, there is the matter of banning /kosher/ slaughtering altogether. One is saddened by this kind of news, /portending/ the strangling and the torture of the Jew, unto the last drop of blood.

Sabbath, 17th of Kislev The First Candle
Hanukka

At a time when everything is in a different season and all things are done differently, a time when the temperature has changed a full one hundred per cent and it is cold and lonely, when it is dreadfully cold out in the streets and in the houses and everyone wears a worried expression about the cold and about what the future holds, at such a moment of depression the holiday of Hanukka has arrived. The holiday warms every Jewish heart,

bringing hope and the courage to endure everything. Hanukka brings to everyone new strength for standing fast by the ways of the Holy Torah. Hanukka braces every Jewish heart. It points out and instructs us about the pride of the Jews of the past. The little candles which every Jew lights teach us very much and become a factor in our daily lives. They demonstrate to us the greatness of the Providence of G-d, Who performs miracles and never forsakes His Jewish people.

Monday, 19th of Kislev
The Third Hanukka Candle

The rays of the sun are obscured by streaks of cloud, revealing the secret of the cruel cold. But such secrets do not explain the reason for the cold now prevailing in the entire area. Everyone is suffering /and/ looking for the answer, wondering about the sudden precipitous attack of frostiness and the strong wind, which is actually dangerous, causing extremely cold temperatures of /minus ?/ twenty-five degrees or worse.

Cold as it is this Monday, I again have the feeling that I ought to go to work once more to earn a few groszy for my expenses. Even though it is really impossible to earn anything in times like these the feeling was awakened in me because I know and understand the financial situation at home. The situation demands that the daily expenditures be met. Yes, one does get the feeling one ought not make oneself suffer. The heart trembles: to be standing all day in such cold! But, so it must be. It is ... important and there is no way of stopping it.

Starting early in the morning, I have been standing in this store

all day. Cold is a frequent visitor in every limb, finding its way to every muscle. I am ruled by the comforting thought that this moment will fade quickly away and better times will come for my parents. My thoughts give me no rest, despite the economic /stet/ work done to satisfy each request. I think about my present position. I feel depressed. My body demands to be warmed. My hands are cold, the blood in them congealed. They feel weak and cannot do any work. But my employers' exploitative demands of me are numerous. They are insensitive to the next person and to his suffering, to how cold one feels. They demand speed despite the fact that it is not possible to arouse speed in numbed limbs. So, the hours thus spent are extremely difficult. Oh, how difficult! The cold penetrates deeply and cuts into my body. I feel I do not have adequate strength, that it is giving out. But personal description of this sort is unacceptable and the merest moment of rest is completely done away with. The day drags on as though it were a year. The cold becomes ugly.

Evening finally begins its slow approach. I yearn for the moment I will be back at home to warm my frozen limbs, which crave a few drops /stet/ of warmth. After freezing all day I am finally home. I received my one zloty, for which I paid with great effort, with difficult, unlimited work. I hasten to warm myself. And how good it is to be at home and to have one! Mother warms me with her gentle hands. She speaks to me in such a way that my frozen feelings are healed and fresh warm thoughts are aroused in me towards my parents, may they live long! They give me courage and comfort me /saying/ that these bad times, too, shall pass and

better moments come, when the sun will begin to peek into our little house. New strengths, new courage will be awakened, and daily living will have some new ways, yet we shall not forget these worries.

Saturday, 24th of Kislev
Hanukka, Candle 8

Moments which have passed are soon forgotten. The days of Hanukka disappeared quickly. It seems to me my eyes were only just now looking at the pretty little flames that penetrate to everyone's soul, /recalling/ the wonderful miracles which occurred in the past. The human mind forgets things quickly. I think of how soon the image of what took place in reality is lost, how wonderful it is to imagine things, how incomprehensible and contradictory.

For this Saturday evening, in observance of the holiday of Hanukka, we arranged an EVENING at our meeting place just for ourselves, to enjoy some time with each other. It went successfully. The importance of the Hanukka holiday was discussed, as was the question of the Jewish people at the crossroads of existence. Everything went according to our program for the evening.

Sunday, January 1, 1939 Tebet
/Untitled/

Without my realizing how quickly, a year has disappeared, and I have not thought specifically or really deeply ... about either the happier or the sad events, /most/ already forgotten by now... Some, however, are well-imprinted in the mind. So far as we can see, the past year did not bring the Jews anything good. On the contrary. The past year was marked by ... the dreadful shedding of Jewish blood and tragic murders perpetrated upon Jews. A very large number of innocent people departed this world, leaving behind their entire families. A large number of families were ruined because one person did not know the whereabouts of the other. More than one father did not know what became of his children; more than one child did not know about his mother. These are the kinds of awful catastrophes that occurred. May G-d grant that in the coming year the situation will be improved and Jews will hear good reports about each other.

Monday, January 2, 1939 Tebet
ON THIS DAY MORDKHE GARMIZE RETURNED from MILITARY DUTY

Nine months have passed since we had the opportunity to see our leader, Mordkhe Garmize, who has been spending the time with another element, with people who are opposed to our religion and have different ideas and ways of thinking. Ordinary persons, they do not understand things. That is the kind of environment he has been in. He has his same Jewish feelings. Hidden deep, deep beneath the uniform there is a Jewish heart. The feelings are Jewish despite the outer raiment, which might suggest that inwardly the person has had other experiences and is governed by other /ideas/. However, it is a mistake to think so. This indi-

vidual has remained what he was, and doesn't have the idea that clothes change the hidden inner recesses of a person. Just the opposite. The terrible hardships he lives through make him stronger and more able to endure bad times ... Every experience, with its tears and hurt, is deeply ingrained in his mind ... He endeavors not to permit his finer feelings to be corrupted ... by the stupidities to which he is not accustomed but ... which one cannot help hearing. One tries to maintain one's spiritual strength. There is much to endure, but what can one do? There is no choice.

Today we have the opportunity to meet at our local. He arrived yesterday and has come to the meeting hall. Once again we listen to his delightful, wise discourse and ... a few descriptions of his life in the barracks.

Thursday, January 5, 1939 Tebet
/Untitled/

Since Sunday we have been enjoying the opportunity to hear and, despite the lengthy periods during which we did not talk, to converse with our leader, MORDKHE GARMIZE, about organizational topics. Once again we see him in person and listen to interesting explanations and accounts of historical events. Each of us listens with pleasure and close attention. Once again, there appear before our eyes many things which clarify matters for us. The talk is about a variety of subjects. He explains to us how difficult and unfavorable the situation is /for Jews/ in the military service. One suffers a great deal and struggles with his own feelings, his ideas, his thoughts and deeds. He gives us

an account of the daily program of activities there ... All the subjects have to do with the aim of developing the organization and learning how to conserve time, to see that it is not wasted on unimportant matters, that something is accomplished every minute. In connection with Germany, he asked whether a person who is learned and educated may be considered mature.

Tuesday, 10th of Tebet
MR. MORDKHE GARMIZE DEPARTED TODAY

The week of his being here passed quickly ... and once again the hour for parting for many long months, of being away from the movement, strikes. No one realized how fast the day was going, how fast the final minutes of spiritual pleasure were disappearing ... We all gather at our meeting hall at four o'clock to talk with him the last few minutes, for he is to leave very soon. The moment is deeply appreciated. Many historical accounts are concealed deep within him. He talks to us, encourages us. But we already know about that. We have some positive ways of strengthening one another. Everyone is aware of missing him in our organization's work. Unfortunately, however, things can't be otherwise; he must complete his period of service. He must do his duty as a Polish citizen. That is how it is. We must say farewell. To the strains of "Ki b'simkho" we all leave for home. Thus one week passes and another arrives.

Wednesday, 11th of Tebet 1939
/Untitled/

I feel tired and sore today. My muscles are stiff, I am dizzy, my bones ache, I am listless and discouraged. I don't have the strength to stand up. I am completely enervated and weak. The reason for this is understandable: The sickness called Grippe is

going around. It is really rampant, reaching everywhere and engulfing all of mankind.

Everyone is very helpless when first falling ill with this sickness. There is nothing for it but to take to one's bed. Oh, how sad at heart one is in such lonely moments, when one is ill! One experiences some sad scenes. And now it has come to me. One is physically broken and weak ... One needs nothing, demands nothing.

At such times, when one is ill, everyone thinks about how nice it is to feel fresh, energetic, well, normal, with no complaints and no elevation of temperature to keep him confined. One does not have sad thoughts. One can accomplish everything. The opposite /state/ is quite different, much more dangerous.

I am unable to write much because my hand and my mind just can't do it today, due to my illness. However, I want very much to record the fact that I am ill, so that I may ... remember it.

Sunday, 15th of Tebet
/Untitled/

On Saturday, in accordance with the Jewish /way of counting the/ passage of days and months, we blessed the new moon of Shvat. According to the Polish /calendar/, however, we are still in Tebet. So far today, it is not cold, but somewhat warmer and pleasanter, praise be to G-d. And I feel a bit better today, thank G-d, than I did before. I feel that I have come through the worst moments. I am in better spirits, more energetic and feel stronger. Nevertheless, I am aware that something is still

wrong. I still am not well, but I am hoping that in time that will change. At this moment I realize how good it is to be in good health and energetic. When a person is ill and does not have good health he appreciates the value of being well ...

January 16, 1939 Tebet
SUDDEN CHANGE in the LIFE of HUMANITY
/Signed at beginning: Sara Fishkin/

Sad reports are reaching us, reports containing a variety of themes. Different ways of life are springing up in these changing times for humanity as a whole. These dissimilar ways possess strange powers and function in contradiction to both the will and the health of people. Man is looking with different eyes at the progress of evil. Everyone experiences it, everyone is aware of these bad times and this unnatural way of life. And now mankind is experiencing all the different diseases which have taken hold of all of the globe ... of Europe, in great number. How disastrous it is for the many to whom future living and career have been denied! Snuffed out for them are the bright rays of life and the pleasures of this world. How sad such tragedies are ... such partings in the unfortunate families ...

/FLAG/ Tuesday, 17th of Tevet, Five Days Before
Rosh Khodesh Shvat
On this day, at five o'clock in the evening, the soul of
FREYDKE KIRMAN, forty-odd years old,
mother of five children,
expired and she went off to her eternal rest,
leaving her ENTIRE family impoverished and in NEED.

How unfortunate, how sad such an event is for the family, how much heartfelt grief and anguish there is when, just at the time the children are developing, their mother is torn from them, leaving her poor little lambs without a leader. Without their mother, their guide, who has left behind her five young orphans,

they do not know how to go on. It is terribly sad to go off alone, while still a young mother, to eternal rest because of inability to endure the great suffering of the terrible sickness which is raging. She is no more. Cut down, torn from the world forever, from her husband and children, her best friends, all that was dear and precious to her, /she has/ entered the state where she wants nothing and needs nothing, of not feeling anything /sympathizing/, of having completed her experiences. The grave has no wants, makes no demands upon one. The earth covers all, the will to live-- Only one thing remains for her: the judgment, the reckoning before the Lord of the World. Her children were left in the terrible, awful suffering that accompanies this dreadful illness. They had no notice that their mother was dying and that they now had no leader, no guide. May it not befall anyone--the children are terribly sick. All of them visit /stet/ the hospital and G-d alone knows what will become of them. If only He would send them His best remedy, that they may at least get well and be able to endure their troubles and their suffering! The same /wish is/ for the eldest daughter, a girl of sixteen, who is also among the ill at the very time of her blossoming. May G-d grant her the strength to bear everything.

Tuesday, 24th of Tebet
/Untitled/

The news is bad, of quite unusual content. There have already been numerous reports that many are experiencing some of the great troubles which are besetting man. There are many rumors about illnesses which wipe out life for many people, and these fearsome sicknesses are pervasive not only here but throughout

the world. They are claiming many victims, many of them innocent, and without regard to whether they are young or old. Everyone meeets the same terrible, gruesome end. Each one is swallowed up by countless heaps of earth--which covers the physical body. True.

May G-d shield us from everything, from everything bad which threatens our young lives so full of freshness, sprouting youthfulness, and thoughts and ideas about taking the next steps into the future. However, everything depends upon G-d and upon His will, and He will do well for us, for we are traveling His way of Torah and Tradition.

Thursday, 26th of Tebet
/Untitled/

Youth is reflected variously. Each person has her own ways, her life, her own manner of developing in general, her own upward path. In each young life these appear in different order. Each individual has her own thoughts, ideas and direction. She looks at the various ways, paths, courses, at how to keep her view of her indefinite-but-expected future development before her eyes. During this time she is able to discern just how she is getting along.

On the other hand, there are other types of people, also young. Their eyes are fixed on the course and the steps leading towards education, refinement of character, habits, manners, everything pertaining to practical behavior among people in social life and to manner of thinking ... Each one's aims are peculiar to her and how she is able to feel with respect to her home life. Yes,

everything calls for courage and energy when it comes to moving ahead, to attaining one's principal goal in accordance with one's plan and fixed mental decision. Difficult, very difficult to reach the higher rungs, to actually see one's imagined fantasies take form in real life.

In the course of the passing days and years events of various content occur. There are times when one is sad at heart because of unattained goals which appear to be very difficult to reach. A wave of thousands of questions and answers engulfs and dominates my mind and everything is deep in a terrible sea of thought and /the attempt/ gradually to find answers, to give myself specific replies. Thousands of uncounted /stet/ questions struggle in my mind, each one pressing towards its own actualization and limits. One of ten will push its way out and illuminate how things look in real life. Is it feasible? Not quite believable, not to be recalled. That is generally how I see things. There is not a moment when I forget about it, about how quickly one's young life, blossoming like lovely, fragrant flowers in fresh air and a clean, clear, fragrant stmosphere, runs by, sometimes without any accounting, like waves or streams of water rushing into the great ocean or the tiny rivulet. It blooms quickly, but during the flowering there are times which are distasteful, when tears of profound pain and grief called forth by experiences and bad times at home are shed. No one knows about them. In the course of the day everything is hidden away in my heart. This deep engraving is the cause of personally felt, long-lasting, unforgettable miseries. ---- Each one has its own duration, its

own content ... and passes in its own quiet, whispering way. Everything can be expressed but it should not become known to the next person. Secreted deep in my heart, interlaced with tears, it ends up unknown by others.

That is what my present situation is like. My feelings impel me to record this so that I may remember and know it in the future, so that I may, with the help of G-d, visualize actual scenes from the past as they were and as they were experienced. My mind is splitting ----. But, let things, including attacks which cannot be forgotten, take their own course, since nothing can really be done about them. Above all, one must feel confident that in actuality everything will pass in its natural way and we shall be left with the faith and the conviction.

/Signed/ Sara Fishkin

Tuesday, 31st of Tebet
/Untitled/

Praise be to G-d for all His grace, which does so much for the entire community of man. In these bad, depressing times, when everything is engulfed by gradual enslavement to the surrounding atmosphere and the prevailing winds, when there is no answer to be found for anything, now, in mid-Tebet, the lovely rays of the sun nevertheless come out for the people who are alive. Although /the rays/ do not give as much light as they do in the summertime they still awaken a happier mood in everyone and prompt a better feeling about the future, the coming period everyone awaits with a full measure of love. During the early months of winter there were times that were fearfully cold, but they have passed and been forgotten. The outdoors is more cheerful. The sunbeams

bounce off the white puffs of snow that looks like precious stones or diamonds...

Perceive in what sort of time you exist. Take note of the end of man. Make certain that you accomplish much, for you will be obliged to give an accounting later, tomorrow, /despite your/ ignorance of when man's tomorrow, and his today, will be. And man's life swims away /lit./ so fast, without being thought about. How rapidly and instantaneously! A shudder passes through one upon thinking with emphasis and depth about everything as it occurs. And so it must be. A purified soul and complete honesty, these were his companions. Clean, fine, taking nothing, G-d forbid it, that was not his, /doing/ everything in the nicest way, owing no one anything, praise be to G-d. He lived his life and went off to his eternal rest. This is the end that every human knows awaits him at any moment. One should know to do good to others as to oneself. That way a person will always be praised, before his death and afterward, and it will be remembered that he was a good, stable individual: He had concern for the next man, helped him, supported him and shielded him from ruin by always feeding and encouraging him. Everyone will love such a person, will always remember him and will feel;

"I miss him."

Tuesday, 7th of Shvat
FROM the NEWSPAPER

A volcano has erupted over all of Europe. Everyone is trembling because the former country of culture and civilization, of science and art, the former country of people has been engulfed by the cruel lava of evil, of snake poison. Upon the vast ruins of culture and civilization there have again come to life wild races of people who torture others and intend to completely destroy their life by swallowing them up completely. Where, actually, could such an ugly debasement of the entire globe and such a silencing of conscience have its origin? This wild expectoration into the faces of all the refined, eminent spiritual figures in the history of mankind--how far did it travel? ... A flash of the hellish fire of malevolence has burst into flames of the most devastating power as it stands at the edge of destruction, of inevitable extinction. This is the great dramatic struggle of these times. The evil, sinister, contemptible forces have instinctively become aware of their approaching end, much as passengers on a ship sense an imminent catastrophe.

And the eyes see and the ears are not deafened at witnessing the terrible storm that is raging. And all of it is being engraved on the history of our time. Today, just as in the past, /we must/ strengthen and fortify all our institutions, build and maintain fortresses of learning with all the might we can muster, and toss our invincible weapon into the fray: our guiding spirit, the spirit of Torah, of justice and righteousness. These are the omnipotent weapons by means of which this despicableness will fall and be destroyed and disappear from the earth forever. The

final, decisive collective declaration bringing the end on earth to evil and baseness is coming.

Sabbath, 11th of Shvat
OUR PAST and FUTURE

A brief parallel about the twenty years of /the existence of/ the Alliance of Youth for Israel /Today, Young Israel?/: The period is simultaneously both short and long: It is short in time and of little significance with respect to the great idea /of the organization/, the eternities of the lofty ideals which it undertook to carry out. It is a long period, however, from the standpoint of the dreadful events we have experienced during that interval: wars, revolutions, spiritual and economic crises, disagreements among nations. /It is/ a lightning flash of hope for us on one little corner of the globe and trouble, darkness in every other corner of our Dispersion.

The Jewish people have lived through difficult times. Could there have been any talk of normal organizational functioning for our organization? Born in the year 5679 /1919/ during a period of war, hunger, pogroms and spiritual ignorance, it was obliged to apply all its meagre strength in its struggle. Every achievement was something snatched, rescued. It went through a long period of conflict with its immediate environment. How difficult this struggle was for Orthodox youth! Liberal, Torah-less nationalism and /the forces of assimilation/ were resolved to implant foreign languages and foreign culture in the Jewish community. Internationalism sought to separate Jewish youth from Jewish sources forever. More and more as time went on Jewish society became

estranged from Jewish sanctities and /Jewish/ spiritual authorities. Opposed by the entire Jewish world, /the organization was/ armed only with courage, good intentions and a lofty idea. This difficult contest has now been going on for twenty years. There have been many achievements as well as many unfavorable manifestations, much that is on the bright side and much that is in shadow. The idea, planted during the elapsed years, has sprouted strong roots. Much beautiful fruit has grown on the tree, and many wormy fruits have dropped from it, but the trunk has remained as strong as a rock and the branches of this tree are beautiful and well developed. However, the tree cannot blossom by itself. To begin with, it is dependant upon its environment. In a warm atmosphere it thrives and blooms and yields good fruit. In a cold environment good fruit cannot grow.

Wednesday, 15th of Shvat
/Untitled/

The newspaper is reporting what appear to be amazing conversations and dialogues between nations. There are accounts of the various discussions taking place between the deputies to the Sejm. They are all on the same topic: about Jews and about vacating them from the positions they have established for themselves. We are being robbed of all the best and most inventive things /and/ other people are taking pride in them. There is the following story, sharp and cutting, of monumental /stet/ significance and shocking in its symbolism. The incident is of great importance.

DAVID SCHWARZ was the son of poor parents in a tiny Hungarian village. From his earliest youth he gave evidence of being

exceptionally gifted and possessed of simply astounding abilities. His discernment and his talent were particularly apparent in the technical field. His parents did not have the means to educate him. There were those in his circle who recognized his genius and informed him that if he were not a Jew he could go far. The inclination to perform scientific experiments was innate in him. In time he conceived the idea of building an airship, a sort of balloon propelled by a light gas. During sleepless nights the idea was expanded, took on strength and penetrated deep into the clouds. He turned to the wealthier class for help. He received no response.

Finally, however, someone did respond: Graf /Count/ Zeppelin, a German in Berlin. He looked disparagingly upon the pale, poorly dressed Jew who sat opposite him. The count could recognize a good thing and demanded that he /the inventor/ assign all the rights to him, Count Zeppelin. Schwarz turned the entire plan for the airship over to the count, to whom he never again gained access. Several months later the press, all over the world, was filled with sensational news, a rumor to the effect that Count Zeppelin had invented an airship. There was an incident:

Schwarz traveled to Berlin, forcibly entered Count Zeppelin's corridor and let out a terrible cry of pain.

"You are stealing from me, robbing me! It is my creation, my invention! My sweat! My mind! My inspiration!" He was not permitted to see the count. He trod upon the ruins of his own life, wandering forlornly from country to country. The end came

in Vienna, where he went about with drooping head and a dull look in his eyes..

The parable applies to the Jewish people. We are the people of David Schwarz. Like him, we have given our discoveries and our treasures away to others. Like him we have been abandoned and unfortunate. Like him, we have been the victims of robbery and depredation. And, like him, we are being evicted from corridors.

Would it really be possible to become free of everything Jews have contributed to culture and civilization?

Wednesday, 22nd of Shvat
/Untitled/

That heart must be desensitized which does not feel the importance of the hour. Beneath the veil of History a struggle centered around the future of the Jews is now taking place, /a struggle/ that has no parallel in the entire two-thousand-year martyrology of the Jewish people. At this time the road is obscured by mist. We do not yet see the way out, but one thing is clear: We must not simply sit by silently with folded hands and watch this historic crisis.

What is taking place before our eyes? To religious Jews, who look at life from a Torah background, who know the implications of every historic event, Erets Israel has never ceased to be the focal point of the Jewishness of the Jewish people. Today, however, Erets Israel is a historic reality, a fateful reality to the Jews. The troubles and persecutions inflicted upon the Jews throughout the world, their self-sacrifices and their blood have

lent our land vivid reality. Strangers have torn up the major roads and bridges leading to our land. The ways of Providence are secret, but we are deeply convinced of one thing: Torah, which our seers proclaimed a return to the true Way, is the way to our source. Even in the most tragic times in all our history as a people we must not despair and must hope that we will be liberated.

For the Torah Jews today, therefore, the hour is a very important one and their task a very weighty one. Every vestige of fear psychosis must be driven off. Every kernel of despair, which inhibits all initiative for great and decisive action, must be rooted out. We do, indeed, encounter bitter temptations and cruel obstacles outside ourselves. Nevertheless, they do not release us from making another attempt and still another to fulfill our obligation with respect to the building of our Erets Israel. In fact, if the Torah masses and their leaders were to gird themselves now with an iron will, with courage and a bit of optimism about the future and proceed with all their might to strengthen their pioneer religious movement, it could be dominant in the Land of Israel.

We must finally put an end to the preaching. We must take on real and creative tasks, shake off infertility, and help to build up a religious labor movement. We must open the iron gates and enter the country in masses to strengthen its /the movement's?/ power and influence in the land. The hour is important. The task invokes our goals. We must shake up all who are indifferent, encourage everyone. At this hour, indifference and hope-

lessness are the worst enemies of Torah Jewishness. We must make haste to create /provide ?/ everything and must not let go of the reins of our determination to bring that about.

Wednesday /Thursday?/, 23d of Shvat
/Untitled/

Life. Some thinkers compare it to the surging sea. Man struggles desperately with its stormy waves. Annihilation threatens him from every side. Man exerts all his effort in attempting to make his way to the shore. To be forever fighting face to face with death and annihilation is hardly a comfortable task. Yet there are those who see this tragic contest as contributing sweetness to life and energy to the struggle. Certain pessimistic thinkers see the world as a deep, quietly moving lake in whose depths Man is immersed, to be moved along whenever he is struck by an object of greater force. There are other thinkers who see Man as being lost in a desert wasteland where there are no paths formed by human footsteps. The hapless wanderers have no idea how far they have gone and how much farther they will need to go. No one knows whether he is going forward or backwards. The burning sands that rise in waves strike the eyes with blindness. No way out is to be seen. Sometimes it appears to the weary wanderer that he is seeing the glow of little lights in the distance, and, occasionally, a lush, blooming oasis where there are people and wonderful palaces. He accelerates his pace, the sooner to arrive at the yearned-for spot. His imagination paints happy pictures in which he sees himself arriving at his destination. Now he is quenching his scalding thirst with the cold, sweet water of the refreshing spring. Now he is enjoying

the delicious fruit. And now he is resting his weary head in the shade of the palm trees. Disappointment soon follows, however. The closer he comes to the place of the imagined oasis, the more he realizes that it was all a vision, an illusion. He chases the beckoning lights, but they keep receding from him, until, finally, he concludes that his vision was entirely imaginary, an empty fantasy.

Perhaps this is no more than literary phraseology, but the bitter truth is that Man has lost his way in life and is groping like a blind person in the dark. The time comes when human conscience is awakened by the sight of all the spoiliation and injustice prevalent in human interaction. People attempt to establish a just social system, for, must not universal order rest upon firmly established, absolute judgments? Human needs are, after all, a consequence of /Man's/ way of thinking, which emanates, by and large, from the narrow frame of his necessities of life /stet/. Some modern men of science have placed human morality on a basis of "will to live". Others have gone even farther and placed it on a basis of "desire for power". There is still another category that completely denies there is a morality which obligates human society.

In order to raise human morality and make it an actual part of life there must be a sacred center, a source of the light of /divine/ influence to illuminate the way for lost humanity. Without this Heavenly light Man's way will not bring him good fortune. The Holy Torah penetrates to the depths of the human

soul and establishes itself there. It points the way to regulating relations among the classes. It gives us the key to solving the problem-ridden muddle of master and slave, private property and collective rights. Its judgments are independent of temporal tendencies and have no relation to place. They are therefore absolute, just and everlasting. All judgments based on a godless system of morality will, in the end, not endure. They will disappear into the abyss of oblivion. Only those judgments based upon Divine morality will be eternal and will exert an influence upon the world.

Monday, 28th of Shvat
/Untitled/

All of us at home are very grieved and troubled as we witness the terrible suffering and pain of my small, young little sister who is only six years old. My heart bleeds as I describe this dark scene. This poor young, bright, intelligent child with pretty, black eyes suffers so! My hand trembles and tears pour down my face when I consider that my pretty little sister has been in bed for some time. Her pretty, black eyes are pasted closed and she cannot see the light of the sun. She lies there and comforts our parents, assuring them that "the moment will arrive when with the help of G-d I shall open my eyes again and play with my little brother, just as I did before."

She describes how she will teach him children's games and, especially, how she will be able to look about with open eyes. Oh, how she yearns to see bright daylight! She has become unaccustomed to it, to the outdoors, to her little friends. I think of her and observe her. The child lies hidden deep in my heart.

She is dear to me. Her clever little remarks ring in my ears.

I hope that this bad, dark time will soon be over and that for her and for us all roads will be bright again, for the roads are dark to our eyes at present. May G-d grant her a speedy recovery for her little eyes.

Sunday, 6th of Adar
PURIM

Today we celebrate the long-awaited holiday of PURIM. By now, it is freer and warmer outdoors. Happier moments are arriving. This day becomes different from all others when we turn the pages of the megilla. Instantly, the tragic pictures of the Jews in times past flash before our eyes. We see the barbaric hands of the villainous Haman, who planned to destroy the Jewish people, to tear out by the roots what lies hidden in every Jewish heart. But in every period of Jewish life there simply must be one individual of great faith who, in acordance with the will of G-d, saves the Jewish people from the enemies who seek to destroy them. At that time /of Haman/ there also lived Esther, the brave woman who as a result of the fine, appropriate education given her by Mordecai was able to advance to higher levels. It was she, actually, who showed the way to the deliverance of the Jewish people.

Tuesday, 14th of Adar
/Untitled/

The sun is ending its daily stroll. Yes, it is reluctant; it would rather not go away. Still tossing out a bundle of beams every so often, it warms and delights the hearts that yearn for it. It rolls slowly down the hill, changing its garment to pale violet and listening silently to the tread of the approach of night darkness. Suddenly the sun smiles broadly, throws out a final glance and hides hurriedly inside the web of the heavens. Then comes the beginning of twilight. How much exquisiteness and magic it brings with it!

The wind summons the botanical world to evening prayer. Trees and their branches whisper softly in unison:

"How great Thou art, G-d!"

And men, quietly earnest, murmur a prayer softly, in measured tones: How great are Thy works, O Lord!
Thou hast fashioned all of them exceeding well! /Psalms?/

It is in one such corner, unnoticed by anyone, that our daughters movement developed. For long periods people have been living with a single thought concerning mutual education and consultation. They have lived in a manner subject to varied interpretation, but the kind of life that is dependant upon separateness and spirituality, forgetting about the world and about the troubles the world brings to the Jews. It means shaking off worry, which prevents one from immersing himself in the Book of Books, freeing the mind of the gnawing thoughts about how much longer we are destined to suffer. We know the rule: G-d's greatest love is hidden away in suffering. It is G-d's wish to hand down to the

world the maximum amount of good. But that is attainable only through the efforts of man. There are in this world two equal possibilities: good, and evil. In order to receive the good, one must fight for it. In so doing, man reveals his hidden strengths. Pain is a trial, a sort of examination one must pass in order to acquire the good. One must do constant battle with his own weaknesses, which work to destroy man's desire to achieve something valuable for the community. Happy are we to be the chosen daughters of the people and to contribute a brick towards the edifice which today is a fundament of Jewry in the spirit of the People Israel.

Sunday, 19th of Adar
/Untitled/

A world of culture and civilization. How much strange power these words contain! In these few words there lies hidden the entire secret of today's intellectual attitude, the one key to /current/ life and thought and freedom of behavior. Yes, it is true that the present state of civilization has improved and beautified life and made it more comfortable. But--whose life? Who enjoys these comforts? Whom have the material improvements of the twentieth century benefitted? Humanity? While modern culture searched for the happiness of all mankind it lost man himself. Today's individual has lost his inner worth. His existence, his death--who cares about them? His life has been pushed off into some far corner.

The blood let in the terrible World War /I/ has not yet dried and already there is striving towards the same again. All of these

educated and civilized people are endeavoring to reduce the fertility of the human species in order that the remaining numbers of people may enjoy more of the earth's wealth and treasures. Our culture differs vastly from this, being distinguished by its pure veracity, and teaches us wisdom that shines with a sunny radiance. It teaches us that man is more important than anything else when each individual is a segment of the world. The more beautiful the individual, the better the entire community.

Today we, our entire people, are living in a dreadful situation. Our rights are being trampled under brutal boots. Civilization is repaying us by shaming and mocking us, by inflicting cruel edicts and persecuting us. They are spitting into the well from which they were drawing clean water. Preaching the annihilation of the Jew is civiliation's agenda for today. Is that really appropriate for the twentieth century? Where are tolerance, equality of citizenship? To put it differently, where are humanity, love of people irrespective of their faith and religion? At every step the cultural world is teaching contempt for the Jew. The world remains silent. No one cares to hear.

Monday, 20th of Adar
/Untitled/

Sad news concerning Jews keeps coming, news of material origin. The principal question troubling Jews right now is that of ritual slaughter. Everyone keeps mentioning the awful attitude towards the Jew, to the point where the complete annihilation of the Jew is intended. Every day, every minute, brings terrible new reports of an endless stream of edicts and persecutions directed

against the Jews. The principal one, which took everyone by surprise, concerns ritual slaughter. They permitted themselves to prevent Jews from using kosher meat ... The deputies in the Sejm are of the opinion that the Jews do the animal harm.

Who can tell what the morrow will bring? The Jews are already in the final stage of trouble. There is great unrest in the world in general. Every government is desirous of-- and is making every effort to--conquer more territory, more wealth. Yes, they are succeeding. Hitler is spreading his barbarian wings over the entire world, aiming to swallow everything up in order to calm his frenzy, which yearns for the spilling of human blood and for annihilation. He is seeing to it that he seizes everything so that it will all be under his rule.

America /is/ the only /country whose/ government genuinely strives for true justice. Among all the barbaric slogans one call comes through against usurping someone else's freedom, for permitting the Jewish people to breathe in freedom. Hitler, who has already managed to conquer Czechoslovakia and Lithuania, now has designs upon Poland, intending to take her cities. But... mobilizations are now taking place in Poland to defend the independence of the state. We face the question of war. One thought is prevalent: either peace or war. The entire world is aroused over the current politics of aggression.

Monday, 3rd of Nisan
Passover Eve

Several cold months have gone by, bringing a variety of impressions which were reflected in the life of our home. And so the

days passed slowly in the expectation and approach of the Eve of Passover. Disregarding all that I go to /work for/ my meagre earnings, knowing that I shall have very good use of the few coins gotten with great effort and hard work. I am busy all day long and do not have even a second to consider what the day might bring. The day drags on slowly until the approach of evening. Now the sun has set. I can't wait for Passover to arrive. Finally, after an entire day of toil, the time arrives for leaving it all.

I walk into the house. I am frozen; every part of me is cold. The holiday is in every corner. Everything is filled with the good smell of the holiday. I am happy about its arrival and that we lived through the year until this Passover. We are all seated at the first seder, glad to be together. The seder is being conducted in accordance with the prescribed ritual. I consider myself fortunate. The words of the Haggada ring out and leave behind lovely, melodious tones.

Wednesday, 5th of Nisan
SECOND DAY of the PASSOVER HOLIDAY

From the newspaper of Sunday, 11th /?/ of Nisan (April 9th), 5699 /1939/: The tragedy of the illegal immigration has reached its point of culmination now that the ship with the 269 illegal immigrants aboard that was seized two weeks ago has been ordered out onto the open seas again. The Greek ship, the Astia/?/, has been wandering about on the ocean for four weeks. As it approached Erets Israel it was arrested by the police. There are about fifty children and one hundred women among the passengers.

Most of the illegal immigrants are from Germany and Austria. For weeks they have been wandering from country to country, from one prison to another, finally arriving in the port city where they joyfully boarded the illegal ship which was to take them to the Holy Land, the land where they hoped to find a peaceful haven for their weary, worn out bodies and souls. But the hand of Cruelty reached even to there. There, in the land of their forefathers, strangers still rule. Scenes from the Spanish Expulsion scream to mind. Then, too, ships sailed off from the accursed Spanish coast. But in those days people could not be quite as ruthless as they are today. In those days there was in existence the great and mighty country of Turkey, which permitted all the wandering ships filled with illegal immigrants to enter its ports. Yes, contemporary civilization is truly advanced. The British Majesty's feelings of mercy are really great. The immediate future will disclose whether the seizure of this ship is a coincidence, or actually the result of a new policy which the government decided to adopt.

Will there not arise a clamoring to save these unfortunates? A problem has arisen which demands an immediate solution.

Sabbath, 8th of Nisan
Passover Half-Holiday

The democratic countries have not yet swallowed the bitter medicine Hitler so unexpectedly gave them to taste by annexing Czechoslovakia, but already England and France face faites accom - plis. Take the matter of Albania. Both Hitler and Mussolini have adopted the same tactics. First they make solemn pledges, then they ridicule those who built great expectations upon the paper

declarations. Hitler guaranteed the borders of Czechslovakia, then he marched into Prague. Mussolini quickly followed the example of his teacher. He too gave England statements in which he obligated himself to respect Albania's independence and immediately thereafter, only several days later, cities were bombarded, slogans about life and death were dropped down and Albania was captured. Before the great political minds manage to confer, Albania will no longer be on the map. Before the great political minds confer, Albania will disappear. By the time the democracies will have adopted their decisions, new problems will likely have arisen. Some new prospects have just appeared for Italy. Yugoslavia will bow its head, Greece wil tremble. Thus new dreams concerning the next candidates for annexation are being spun by Mussolini. And if one takes into account the vacillating policies of the democratic countries, which keep tying knots in ribbons in the hope of slaking the wild thirst that is being manifested by the fascist countries, one must confess that /the dreams/ may easily come true. The sky is clearing /stet/ and the political situation gets worse from day to day. Not only was there a desire to encourage and comfort the masses a little with pretty phrases, but even the leaders themselves came into a more optimistic mood. The dictatorships are conquering one new position after another. They are growing stronger every day. Plans are being carried out quietly and with the speed of lightning. The Rome-Berlin axis is manifesting inexhaustible energy. The political situation is changing hourly, and with it, the map of Europe. Countries disappear overnight. Hitler sounds the first

notes, then he occupies the country. The danger is great, and ways are being sought, even though they may not be palatable, to fend off the enemy.

/The beginning of the next entry is missing./

---No matter how much was done, no matter how much it was wished that she remain alive, if G-d did not will it... nothing was of any avail. The dreadful sickness that raged in her blood devoured everything and she fell a victim, unable to endure the terrible suffering. Her mother's heart is full of holes from seeing such pictures. May no mother ever have such complaints, which must have pierced the seven heavens, at having to make such a sacrifice, to give up such a tree. She is aware of only one thing: the accounting one must make to the Lord of Hosts. Man lives on faith and hope alone and that is how one forgets all the misfortunes which occur. No sort of comfort appeals to the mother. To her, having experienced such an event, everything is dark, all paths are overgrown with wild thorns. Everyone is very dejected: Such a tree has fallen, such a gentle dove that never hurt anyone in the least. /She/ forgave everyone, suffered inwardly, hardly ever unburdened her broken heart to anyone. The entire city, kith and kin, walked in her funeral. Rivers of tears flowed from everyone's eyes. No one can forget it. But one lives with the comforting thought that G-d's judgement is just and no one can do a thing about it. Thus it must be. ITTE RAYKHLSON, Yenkl Lakyes the sheet-metal worker's daughter, died at one o'clock in the afternoon on Monday. Nisan. Spring. April 24th, 1939. Two days after Passover. /13? days/

Monday, May 7th

On Friday, after twelve noon, Hitler will make his compensatory /Stet. Should read "explanatory"?/ speech. The hour set has something symbolic about it. Will it be the twelfth hour striking for peace? Is the twelfth hour striking for Hitler's marches? This question has been hanging on the lips of all people for days. What will he say? And after he says it, what will happen? Everyone and everything awaits his speech. If anyone is facing a definitive decision he has put it off until after the twenty-eighth. The leaders of the Third Reich always take into consideration the psychological effect of their public appearances. They play upon the nerves of the masses, not only of their own masses but also upon the nerves and the psychology of other nations. Those nerves must be strained to the greatest degree, to the utmost. It is true that in these times it is not possible to keep one's word. Nowadays, falsehood parades around free as can be and mocks at promises made and assurances given. Not upon Roosevelt does it depend, but upon Hitler alone. Then came the second step. The new German government turned to some of its neighbors, the smaller ones, and naively inquired whether they feel threatened by the Third Reich. Their responses are very diplomatic, edited. If one cared to, one could read out of them that, G-d forbid it, but who is afraid, whose anxiety is that great? Who can say, how it will all end?

Wednesday, 24th of Iyar
FIRST DAY of SHABUOTH

After the sad moments for the Jewish people, after the three weeks of counting the 'omer, the joyous day for the Jewish people

has come, Shabuoth. How much rich past fills this holy day! Everyone celebrates it with great joy, remembering the important event that occurred during the period, when the Jewish people accepted the Holy, Sacred Torah on Mount Sinai. Very great changes came into the life of the Jewish people. Many Jews fell as victims in the struggle for the Land of Israel. And now, in these recent moments, /come/ the terrible edicts: the publication of the White Paper, which threatens to do away with the independence of Erets Israel. How much misfortune has occurred, separating wives from husbands, children from parents, all of whom have remained abandoned and unhappy, not knowing of each other's whereabouts!

There is much unrest in the world. Envy and hatred of one people towards another are rampant. This Shabuoth day teaches us a very great deal. At the time it took the Torah the Jewish people rejoiced. One thing prevailed, one idea, one aspiration, one goal. There was no divisiveness; none was visible. That is really true. Nowadays things are just the opposite of what they were in those times. The entire Jewish people is divided into a number of factions. Each individual has his own idea. One treads the way of G-d, another has lost his way along dark, evil paths. There is great division. People do everything in whatever way the mind happens to dictate. No deterrants appear during the perpetration of unsuitable deeds. Good has been tossed to one side. Everything is enveloped in fatal error, the thought that evil, un-Jewish things are to be taken as good for one and for the entire community. A thing is not seen as evil,

is always seen has having a positive result. That brings harm to the whole community. No one gives any accounting of the behavior. No one thinks about it or is willing to account for himself. This dreadful conception, which is really erroneous, that one is completely in order, is always in /their/ thoughts. No one thinks about the question at all but is always looking for a comfortable place to enjoy /himself/ while pushing the time away. And so it passes, in its own way.

/Undated/

VARIOUS IMPRESSIONS AFFECTING the EXPERIENCING INDIVIDUAL

The moments pass quickly, with a speed quite unnoticed, and with their passing new times soon arrive and new methods, new plans, with different content, are created in the mind. Each is tied to its own theme and scope as planned in the human mind. Each thing has its own appointed time, each impression contains its own challenge as it is experienced by people, in accordance with their interest in the matter. Each person has his own interpretation of the content of the impression, his own understanding of it and of its value to him. Everything has attractive characteristics which force the individual to interpret, to discuss and to inform ... The individual is surrounded and dominated by a variety of thoughts and plans and projected actions concerning the manner in which he is next to look at life and of handling the question of what work to do next so that, G-d willing, it may lead me to happiness ... fulfillment of the proposed plan for building a family life.

This question is accompanied by many hopes as I think about attaining my goal and making it a reality. Each individual possesses the strength to wait for a designated thing and hopes that before long it will confront him. But things are not always as one would like them to be. Things do not always happen as the individual thinks they will. Various obstacles sometimes stand in the way and prevent one's reaching his destination. A variety of bad things delay progress towards realization and thus beautiful planned goals are shattered and set aside and eventually lost sight of, hidden in deep wounds within the human being. There is

no longer any desire to bring them to mind and think about them. The door is shut to them. They are pushed aside so that they may the more quickly be forgotten and stop making the heart heavy. Not to be mentioned again, they are finished; the threads binding these past matters to memory have been snapped.

Create for yourself new images, lovely, devoid of all shadow, concealed under masks, radiant, happy goals that will bring light to the person's saddened mood. May good times arrive in the life of the one who is suffering! For following suffering and great hardship joys and good times come for the one who has been experiencing bad times, been oppressed and concealing everything deep in the heart so that no one will know. No one will have any inkling of his bad material situation /either/. Quietly, however, he thinks to himself that all will pass, both good times and bad, joyous moments and sorrow-filled ones. Nothing appears except in its appointed time, nor passes of its own natural accord. One's mind is always enveloped in thoughts of this sort.

/Signed/ Sara Fishkin

Wednesday, June 7, 1939 7th of Sivan
/Untitled/

Since early morning the bright sun has been shining in at the windows, glancing in with its warm rays. It comes up in its usual way, in both light and dark colors, breaking out from among the covering shadows of night darkness, wakes from its sleep and warms the little blades of grass and all the sprouting things in nature chilled by the night. It warms the waters streaming in rapid tempo to their daily task. Travelers on the road because of

need or to fulfill their personal aims notice all this as they go quietly along, listening to the sound of the turning wheels and the slow trot of the horses and seeing everything as it comes before their eyes, observing how beautifully the morning begins to unravel and merge into day. How beautifully the lively picture of day comes up after the moonless night! At every door the hurried work of the day begins. Every one is rested from the night, has gathered new strength to go on with his labors. One feels fresh, energetic, healthy, rested in every muscle after the /previous/ day's work. Oh, how beautifully G-d's world is ordered! Yes, lovely. But not for everyone. There are those who do not like it at all, do not appreciate it, who dislike pleasure and joy because on account of their suffering they cannot arrive at the pleasurable but are always engrossed in their one thought.

Tuesday, 13th of Sivan
/Untitled/

The long, warm days of Sivan are remembered by everyone. Each person recalls several nice characteristics of the day, the pleasant, uneventful moments that occasionally occur. People recall the warm temperature that prevailed at the time. They begin to emphasize the impression it made and its effect on one's attitude. They begin to analyse the day's merits and, on the other hand, its faults. They remember that it came unexpectedly and that they survived it, unexpected as it was. A good event is experienced more quickly /than a negative one/, for the hours and moments pass faster, and it is forgotten more slowly because one keeps imagining the things that were experienced during good times. During other events, the hours drag more slowly. The

time pushes along, but it does not pass quickly. One would want it to go with one quick move, but it is in no hurry to end its undesirable coming. Yet it does pass, with deepening wounds and indelible pain. It passes, but is difficult to forget. Everyone experiences a variety of things, some in one way, others in some other form. Both have different content. Each one proceeds to its address, each has its sequence for reaching the recipient, each has its pace and degree of being recalled.

June 18, 1939 Sunday, 18th of Sivan

How lovely, how sublime Nature appears! How colorful the planted fields are, how prettily the fragrant flowers sprout forth, how charming they are to the eye! How much pleasure the fragrant perfumes they give out bring to a person! Sometimes they revitalize one's saddened thoughts, awake many a pleasant memory in one's heart, make it possible to forget for at least a few short moments one's unhappy thinking aroused by--G-d forbid it!--some unfortunate event, put off for a short time the unenjoyed encounter, delight one's mind. The pretty songs of the flitting birds that perch in tops of tall trees high on the hills can be heard. From the treetops are heard delightful, attractive tones of melodies unintelligible to man. The birds sing in the manner natural to them. Their singing prompts a fervent prayer to G-d, offering Him praise for what He has wrought, for His creation. In the spring everything awakens and thrives. Everything awakens from its sleep, is revived, begins to give forth its fruit, begins to unfold its life and progress. The quietly falling rain moves in gentle waves as it sprinkles the fields,

all things that grow. Encouraged by the rain, everything unfurls even more and spreads out. Springtime means vitality to the living person and to awakened nature.

Wednesday, 21st of Sivan 1939

Today I am dominated by a single thought which will not go away. It has taken firm hold and I keep thinking of it constantly and would like to make it come to pass, namely: to leave this sad town called Rubiejewicze and spend a few days in Shtayfts at my sister's. And that is what actually happens.

Nightfall. The sky is spread with a lovely outpouring of various colors from among which the brilliant stars beam through to illuminate the moon, thus adding the final loveliness to adorn the Sivan night. The light breeze saunters ever so slowly and with an occasional wave, as if to encourage everything to grow under the warm night sky. When we depart it is already twelve o'clock. In quiet loneliness we leave the town, which is deep in the long sleep of its inhabitants. Calm, quiet. The only thing audible is the voice of the distant river. The frogs are not asleep. They keep murmuring their long night prayer continuously. They call out, and all around it is completely quiet, dark, sad.

Several hours pass quickly--one, two--and soon one sees the sun begin to unwrap itself as it hastens towards morning. Slowly, it grows light. The birds sing so sweetly! I do not sleep, but observe how lovely nature looks. By now we are far from Rubiejewicze, many kilometers away. Far from home, town, girl friends, everything that is dear and precious. Long hours later we are finally in Shtayfts. Done. I could hardly wait for the moment.

Enough of traveling. Brother and sisters, we meet and exchange fond kisses. We chat and talk fraternally and comfortably. The moment is most interesting. We separate: My sister goes off to work, my brother to his classes, and I am left alone once again.

Friday, 23d of Sivan
IN SHTAYFTS

I have been here several days now, since Wednesday. Girl friends come in. We talk and chat, pleased with each other. They are interested in news of Rubiejewicze; I want news about Shtayfts. That is how it is each day. And now the beloved day, Friday, has arrived. Like it or not, one must prepare for the Sabbath. There is no one else to rely upon to get it done. Mother is not going to come here to make ready for the Sabbath, and neither is anyone else. There is no one but me. One is busy all day preparing everything that is necessary rushing and running. Finally, Friday evening arrives, a respite after the long, long day. There is no near person with us, neither father nor mother nor our tiny little brother. We sit forlorn. The night is warm and we feel like going out for a while to walk. Everyone goes away. And so the days pass without any enriching content at all.

Wednesday, 28th of Sivan In Shtayfts

The week passes quickly. The seven days go by fast and the new week soon arrives. I have now been here a week. Sometimes when I go outdoors it is difficult for me to believe I am in Shtayfts. It appears to me I am in Rubiejewicze and I keep seeing it before my eyes. But in a comparison of the city and the little town major differences appear. In the larger city the Sabbath is less

marked. It is scarcely evident. People forget that the Jews have the Sabbath, the very foundation of Jewishness. People desecrate the Sabbath, do all sorts of things it is forbidden to do on that day. Actually the Sabbath is not the obstacle here. If something promises to provide pleasure it will be done and devil take the Sabbath. It is a sad moment when anyone resigns from Judaism, from the Holy Sabbath, from the Holy mitsvot, from the Torah, from the Jewish chain which must be kept unbroken. Sad is the moment when anyone forsakes so bright an ideal, so clean a way, and goes off onto other, dark paths he does not uderstand and which lead to the swamp of demoralization and delusion. How sad a moment it is when one employs only his own will to get things done and is led to very base attitudes and low levels. He forsakes all that is Jewish, does whatever the mind dictates ... believing that this way of thinking could bring real, exalted deliverance for all Israel. But, how foolish the idea that G-d will lead them into Erets Israel if they go counter to G-d's command and do just the opposite sounds! One must possess a blunted heart and feelings if one is to stand by and observe all that is done. According to Jewish ways, it is entirely incomprehensible. Everything they do undermines and leads to the decline of the Jewish people. For the real Jew the Jewish people's today is sad; its tomorrow is even sadder.

Friday, 30th of Sivan In Shtayfts

Friday, the day of preparation for the Sabbath, has arrived at last. I have finally begun to remember all I have forgotten. Suddenly there streams before my eyes all of the homey household

life, father and mother preparing food for the Sabbath, looking at everything from the point of view of how it would do the most good for the children. I especially remember how dear the moments are when we all sit together at table in holiday garb. The Sabbath spirit is all over the house. Father pronounces the Kiddush (benediction over the wine) and after several long moments of silence the ringing voice is heard saying "Amen!"

Yes, indeed. That is how life at home appears. On the other hand, we are here in Sztolpce /Shtayfts/, far away from home and separated from our parents, sister, brother, town. We three children are making our own home life. We ourselves must think about the things necessary for existence. The three of us, sisters and brother, sit at the table and talk pleasantly, comfortably. We tell each other our general experiences away from home, tell about events of various import. We are happy to be together at one table and to talk of what happened where.

We express various opinions, think about the situation at home and that it is lonely there now, with all three older children away somewhere else. How precious it all is when it is whole, when we are all together in the same place. In the city life is obviously quite different. There is more gaiety. People are savoring life and enjoying themselves. One feels he is the equal of anyone else. We converse peacefully. We two sisters who haven't seen each other for several long months tell about our work situations. We are interested in each other's lives and talk in sisterly fashion, holding nothing back from one another. My sister remarks that being at home is much better than living

away, where there is no one to consult with or, occasionally, to whom to pour out one's heart. She is fully occupied every day, immersed in the clamour of working and living. She does not have a single free hour. She is busy at work all day. Everything must be prepared in advance, because if it is not there isn't any. During the time that I am there, we feel good, pleased with each other. As evening approaches, it brings with it the moment of the arrival of the Sabbath. We are all at the table. We are happy to be together. The children are homesick, longing for Mother and for Father.

When we walk in the streets we notice various things. There are people of various types, each one with his own character and education, his own life context. In this respect one sees a wide range. Good or bad, everything may be seen there.

Monday, 2d of Tamuz Left for home today.

Everything that exists needs and strives for improvement. Innate in everything is this ability to long for what is better. It seems that somewhere else things will be more comfortable, more desirable ... The human being has unlimited desire: wants good, wants happiness, wants work so that he may earn his bite of bread, hopes that the greatest good fortune will come into his life. Yes, one has desires. The mind is too small to understand what it means to desire. One might want to attain a very high level, but at the self-same moment a question and immediate answer arise. Will it be possible for me to attain that level, fulfill that want? And, do I deserve good in my life? Over

everything there is a Single Ruler, apportioning to each one either desire and the ability to fulfill, or desire alone, without fulfillment.

While I was at home I saw myself fulfilling the thought that I could find work here /in Stolpce/. After all, it is a city. /I'd be/ together with my brother and sister and find work, too. That way things would be easier for Father. But that is not what happened. Happiness is where we are not. No matter what work one might want to do, there is none to be found. There is no way of earning a living. Everything is filled. It therefore occurred to me to leave, to return home.

While at home one thinks living somewhere else might be better. But that is only a thought, only something one brings to mind to think about, even at this moment. The time I spent here passed fairly well. Life is pleasant here, with my sister, but work, doing something, is missing, although, to be sure, there is no lack of things that need doing at home. But it is natural to want something better.

I'll have to get ready to go home. There is no point in staying any longer. That is how it is. That is how our young years pass and our youth is washed away. A week, days, months and the year is gone and there is a new one in its place, with fresh worries, thoughts and wonderings, new ideas.

This is a clear, bright sunshiny day. Later on, however, it turns cooler, large clouds begin to develop and then a terrible rain pours down. It doesn't last long. By now it is three

o'clock. We say our goodbyes. My sister is not ready to have me leave so soon but I am not deterred by that.

The journey is very long. The hours drag. We travel along slowly. As we ride I think about the results of our discussions, about the thoughts I heard from opponents of our way, about the opinions they expressed and their attitudes towards our goals. I wonder what prompted them to talk, but later on everything, their purpose and their intentions, became clear to me. I thought about it all the way home. The hours passed and at about ten o'clock we arrived in Rubiejewicze. The same gloominess. Calm. Quiet. Everyone is already asleep. The sky is sprinkled with its stars. The wind rocks softly and listens to the shaking leaves. We are back in Rubiejewicze.

Saturday, 8th of Tamuz

The experiences people have find various expression. In some areas thoughts fade away altogether. Some fortunate things occur and some people encounter misfortunes. In the life journey of humanity various changes occur, tragedies and other scenes, happy moments and, on the other hand, oppressive times, bad times when the means of livelihood are taken away from families and there is only one remedy: to beg the one who did the discharging. Perhaps by begging hard /the livelihood/ will be returned. Times are bad when there is nothing else to hold on to, no other business. There is no road to something good. Different things occur.

There were times when Father, by great effort and hard exertion,

did, with the help of G-d, earn enough for our household needs and /we were/ always satisfied with whatever work was apportioned to him. But now difficult times have come. Life is hard when they go so far as to take away one's bite of bread, to keep one from earning a living. It is a bad moment and it is difficult to describe. It is even forbidden to go out in this heat, which in itself is hard work, to look for some kind of drudgery. If it were permitted, at least. But no, not even that.

Who can tell what the outcome of that will be? The individual lives with the one hope that G-d will help him and show him the way to a livelihood. May G-d bring good fortune to all our labors.

Wednesday, 19th of Tamuz

These spring days fade quickly. The months preceding Tamuz went by fast. Man's life, in general, goes by fast. And now the sorrowful days of the month of Tamuz have arrived, the Nine Days, which have a sad connotation. Mournful scenes occurred in that past of difficult times for the Jewish people. Foreign nations coveted the Jewish sanctuaries, wanted to plunder the Holy Temple of the Jewish people. Jewish hearts were saddened, Jewish souls were flecked with sin. Instead of coming closer to Jewish learning, they withdrew from it and, little by little, turned away from G-d's way. They began to search for other ways, other ideals, other modes of life. They abandoned the Jewish way, became estranged from everything. G-d could not watch this turning away, G-d could not excuse those who were stomping on the Jewish mitsvot /commandments/. What did G-d do then? He sent

foreign leaders to show how to do battle /?/ on Jewish heads. Titus comes to power. He gives the Jewish people no peace. He endeavors to drive them away, to tear out the divine roots the Jewish people had. The Holy Temple--that could no longer be for the Jewish people either. All of that because the Jewish people turned away. Then the enemies came, burned the sacred Temple, laid siege to the Holy City of Jerusalem, drove the Jews out. The Jewish city lay in ruins.

/End of untyped, earlier section of the Diary/

1941-1942

SUNDAY June 22 1941

TO

SATURDAY MAY 16 1942

From the Diary of Sarah Fishkin

Sunday, 22nd June 1941 (Wolozin)

Today the War Between the Russians and the Germans Began. This week has passed quickly, marked by the steady rhythm of the work. Yet, each day has its own pace, each hour its thoughts about how to better one's daily life. How swiftly time disappears! One has so little opportunity for deep consideration of anything not pertinent to one's immediate concerns. That is emphasized by the fact that a person cannot forget about what time can bring with it. This causes a dreadful state of confusion in the human mind and in the thoughts arising from the depths of memory.

Yes, the day has gone and night has come. The sun set slowly; one would have wished it to go on shining longer, to keep the natural environment warm for several hours more. But that is not what happens. Stars appear and smile into the darkness of the night. Here and there the last conversations of still wakeful humanity can be heard. From afar comes the sound of swaying branches. And thus, slowly, everything sinks into a quiet, melancholy sleep.

One sleeps restfully, dreaming dreams of beautiful fantasy, true balm to the unsleeping mind. How rich the content of today's dream! If only it could last on and on! How disappointing to the young person to awaken and realize it was all only a utopian vision! With what displeasure one then regards oneself and one's imagination! The night nears its end; the final hours pass

quickly; the dim light of morning approaches. Today is a day of rest: I do not have to go to work. It is a quiet day, and I don't feel like going outdoors.

Now it is three o'clock. I did not begin to imagine that upon going out into the street I would hear such startling reports. Several seconds earlier I certainly had no idea that a war had broken out. Anyone who considers the meaning of this surely must understand the results it can bring but must remain silent, as silent as those who do <u>not</u> see.

How unquiet my mother's heart must be today because her children, instead of being at home beside her, are far! far! away. A single sigh from deep in her heart must be her sole response to her misgivings and the entire situation. Yes! In this difficult experience, who can comfort Mother's heart today? Who can tell her where her children are?

<u>Monday, 23rd June 1941 (Wolozin)</u>

It is with altered conceptions and very different emotions that everyone sets out for work today. Our thoughts are now dominated by questions of all sorts. We are all now thinking of the moments soon to come. One must make peace with one's fate. These times are very strained. Mobilization has begun. There is great hustle-bustle. One feels so helpless, so lacking in personal effectiveness. Each one asks himself how it will all turn out. Sometimes the answer is tragic. Bad times--times of hunger and death--await us.

Still, experience has taught us that the politics of the world is not static. It has a way of changing with the times. Many of the plans of government are overturned, many of the beautiful things that have been promised for the good of the people are lost sight of, many impressive slogans, speeches--everything becomes transitory. So, to what in one's youthful feelings shall one turn one's thoughts now? What new road take if everything is always changing? Yet, the human being survives, survives everything, and in the process acquaints himself with new views and alternate ways.

The moment has now arrived to make a person look for a way to save his own life, to hide from the bombs which may be coming in the very near future. Many leave their homes. They ride off without a destination. One looks the end of life squarely in the eye: the bullet could hit soon. Still, the desire to spite Fate and go on living is very strong: One wants to see what the end will look like when it does arrive.

Tuesday, 24th June 1941 (Wolozin)

Another day is going by. One hears a variety of reports and it is difficult to ascertain the outcome or to foresee on what it will depend.

The human being is crushed and has no idea what to do. This day already speaks of many changes. We are not working. We look at each other, knowing that these are the last days we shall spend in our collective with our familiar fellow workers. These are the last few hours we shall be sitting together, and we are

discussing the prospect of not being within the walls of the editorial office. Tears appear in the eyes of everyone. Each one senses how the other feels. It is a sad moment of parting.

A long time has gone by, thirteen months, since I came to work here. Getting acquainted with each other, the mutual understanding--everything contained so much harmony! Now, in these moments, while we are still sitting on this bench, we take stock of our past. In case there was an occasion on which we did not get along amicably we apologize to each other so that there will be no lingering animosity . Everyone is very gloomy; indeed, everyone is being choked by tears of pain.

The day has drawn to its close. The sun has set and the warming rays of light have disappeared. The stars are out in the sky. There is a strong wind prevailing. The hour is now one past midnight and we are making preparations for a long journey to save our lives.

This night has taught us much. The desire to remain alive is strong. I would certainly like to enjoy more of these, the days of our early youth. It breaks my heart to be oh, so far from home! Who knows whether or when I shall meet with my parents again, with my sister and my little brothers? To be left here all alone, without any close person and without a roof over my head is bad, too. It is not possible to go home at this time, so my single alternative is to go to "M" with everyone.

Now it is four o'clock in the morning and we shall soon be departing. One can hardly describe how sad everyone is.

The way is long. Day is breaking. We have already traveled fifteen kilometers. The road is black with people on foot. But now an official in a taxi approaches and tells us to go back.

We heed him and turn back. The city is quiet. One does not hear about what is going to happen tomorrow and does not think about it .

Wednesday, 25th June 1941 (Wolozin)

Today the Germans Entered Our City and Captured It

The morning is warm and clear but there is much disquiet. The journey has tired everyone. We had scarcely stumbled into the house before we had to go off to the editorial office. There were four of us in all: both girls (Liuba Ries and Liza Khayet), Zioma Levin and I. A short time passed quietly, then suddenly a German aircraft came rushing in and commenced a bombardment of the city. We were afraid to remain indoors any longer and went out to an orchard, where we waited calmly for Death to approach. It is terrible when the bullets are flying about overhead and it seems that at any moment one of them will strike and put an end to our young lives. But how wonderfully the heart, filled with absolute calm, dictates: With much confidence we continue to look Death right in the eye and wait to see what will happen in the hours immediately ahead.

Shortly after the bombing and strafing of the city begin, we suddenly notice a large army of Germans approaching us on the road we are traveling. All thoughts of staying alive become shrouded in great sadness. A brief, forgotten confession passes

before our eyes. One has just seen one's final moment of youthful life.... I feel in my quaking heart the desire to perish together with my family, to end my young life beside my parents, so that they may know that their suffering eighteen years young child, whom they mention so often with tearfilled eyes, has perished and now rests in the cemetery.

That was the wish, and that alone. But how much more cheerful one's heart grows when our lives are spared and we are commanded to leave the place where we are! We go, although we do so with great hopelessness, and stop some distance away. From afar we can see the city engulfed in terrible flames, great clouds of smoke obscuring the light of the sun, which keeps shining on as if to say that all this has nothing to do with it, neither pains nor moves it. At this time the warm rays of the sun appear to everyone to be slow-moving black shells being dropped on suffering humanity. Human labor and sweat are being consumed in the flames. Innocent people, their lives stopped by bullets fired by a deliberate barbaric hand, drop in the streets. It is so painful to watch: The same kind of end awaits everyone.

The Bolsheviki have abandoned their positions and are also fleeing to try to save their lives. The people who have fallen are now at rest, having given up their souls with a final sigh for the wish to live. A friend was shot today, too, one with whom we studied all year, one who helped us and whom we helped: The eighteen year old youth, Peysakh Maza, died in spite of his desire to live.

We are out in a field. The planes rush by over our heads. Our thoughts are involuntary. "Mother!" one feels like screaming. "Mother! Was it worth spending so much effort and time on your children? Where are they now? You know not what awaits them in a strange city under war conditions. Dear, devoted parents, wouldn't you like to have a look at your suffering children who haven't seen you and whom you haven't seen for such a long time?"

Yes, the hearts of the sympathizing parents are surely broken and very bitter. Yet, what can they do for us? Nothing.

The day is drawing to a close. The fire grows worse and worse. We are under the open sky. Some singing of birds can still be heard. Their song is also a melody of sympathy with man. From far off comes the crying of little children whose mother and sister were killed when a bomb exploded in their home. In a single moment, the terrible sacrifice of a mother and by her side her young daughter of thirteen years. The heart simply turns to stone at the sight of the sort of thing that is happening-- and at the thought of what awaits us.

There are three of us here:Liuba Ries, Liza Khayet and I. There is still a piece of dry bread beside me. My heart is torn apart: Where did we leave our best friends, Masha Waszcilina and Khayim Epshteyn? We don't know what became of them and it is possible we shall never see them again. The last time we were together was during yesterday's journey. Today neither of us knows the whereabouts of the other. Dangerous roads filled with evil

await us all. Life in these moments is entirely inexplicable. One cannot analyze the heavy suffering so great a part of mankind is experiencing at present.

Now it is growing dark. Complete silence reigns among us. The sun set long ago. From out of the quiet of the night's blackness there reaches us the sound of the restlessness of other people whoare also spending the night under the open sky. We lie down to sleep. The night is dark and cold; there are no stars in the sky. It seems as though they, too, prefer not to be present in such an evil, ominous time. The cold burrows into our every bone. There is nothing to cover oneself with. The mosquitos bite us.

I keep thinking of those times when I was completely free, when, after work, everyone went home to rest. But now all that is gone and I don't feel like recalling the past. Thus, slowly, the time passes and we grow drowsy. The prevailing wind adds a bit of a tune to the soft night music and we sleep. It is quiet. We cannot believe that our situation is real. We dream dreams of a better, brighter morning.

Thursday, 26th June 1941 (Wolozin)

We awoke very early. The morning was cold, so cold we shivered. It seemed to us that the bright sun would never begin to shine and warm everything. The hours drag on. Now it is five o'clock. Everyone is weary and stiff from having slept onthe cold, wet ground, which had seemed soft enough to us at first. Now we ask each other whether we should really have expected it to be any

better.

Time begins to pass more quickly. The movements of the people and the little children around us as they awake from their sleep begin to be heard. The sun begins to send down its comforting warm rays. We lie for a long, long time before our thickened blood feels warmed. Then hunger begins to bother us. There is no bread. There is nothing to sustain us.

But there is always G-d's support. His help comes not without effort on someone's part. There are always good people who will not let others fall by the wayside. They can see themselves in the otherperson's oppressive, reduced circumstances and they help.

This day is difficult again, like yesterday was. I feel choked by questions and my head is simply splitting, but I am growing accustomed to the situation. Thus two more days under the open sky pass and there is no improvement whatever. My sadness increases whenever I catch sight of the burned-out city. Desolate, shattered, a great many buildings and masonry walls have nothing but their foundations left standing. All wires are down. The smoke refuses to dissipate, darkening the sky.

Sunday, 29th June 1941 (Wolozin)

The war has now beenn in progress for a week. Our situation

continues unaltered. We are still all together. Thoughts about being parted from parents are very disturbing to our suffering hearts. Our feelings find expression in the premonition that we may never have another opportunity to converse with each other. We are sick of existing under such conditions, but we have no choice.

It is no longer possible to endure this living in the field under the open sky and upon the cold, damp earth. I will be parting with the girls today and must go in search of a home somewhere. We say goodbye with tears in our eyes, not knowing whether we shall ever see each other again. They shall go wherever their eyes take them. I have found some good people, the family of my friend Halina Szwinjarski, kind folk who can understand other people's feelings.

My feelings during these moments of leave-taking from these best, most understanding girls are suffocating. We start out in opposite directions. For a while they will still be visible, but soon they will be out of sight altogether. The tall trees are beginning to obscure everything. The question now is whether we shall ever meet again.

Wednesday, 16th July 1941 (Wolozin)

It has been a lovely, warm day. We have been planning since early morning to go into the woods for berries. We walk a long way before getting deep into the dense, completely silentforest. Then, gradually, we get to work. We can hear the melodies of the little birds as they sing and express their appreciation of the

tall, thick woods. The hours pass quickly. Those other, more oppressive thoughts are forgotten for a while and our attention is on the forest. The day is already coming to a close when we leave the dense woods. There is still a distance to go. We must make haste to get home.

Sunday, 20th July 1941 (Rubiezewicze)

A long period of nearly three weeks has passed during which I have been with these kind, good people, the Szwinjarskis, who have treated me like their own child. The overall situation, for the Jews, is very strained, but I don't sense any antipathy in this family so far as Jews are concerned. They always treat me with good-natured laughter and complete human outpouring. My longing for home has not actually been great, though every so often my heart would be troubled. Yesterday I was even thinking of going home, but something better came to pass: How happy my mood turned when I learned that my father and brother had arrived! Feelings for home were awakened and now dominated my thoughts.

The morning was bleak. The sky was overcast with ominous dark clouds and for a long time the wind shook the branches of the trees. It seemed that soon rain would come pouring down. Who could have imagined there would be such an appropriate accompaniment to our departure onto the long road home?...

I had risen very early and then came the moments for parting with true friends with whom I had experienced days of sharing everything. I had to take leave of all the familiar scenes, cast

final glances at the once lively but now razed city. Briefly, a memory picture flashed by of moments when I worked there. Now the place was in ashes and desolate. Those times passed quickly but they are recalled with creeping inner pain. They cannot be forgotten. And, why should one forget meaningful moments--happy or miserable--whichone has experienced in life?

Now I've taken leave of all. The tears were choking me as I parted with Halina Szwinjarski, her uncle, her aunt, the children, and went out onto the road, which could tell of many an encounter in these unsettled days of war. But the road is deserted now. No one walks it but the three of us. We have already gone several kilometers without seeing anyone. Still, we are uneasy, for it would be good to get home without heartache and as soon as possible. Next we come to a great forest twelve kilometers long. But with the help of G-d we traverse it safely. Itis already one o'clock. We are now in Iwjeniec. We do not stop but hurry on. We hear about sad events: the bloody massacre of Jews. The situation of the Jewish people is most tragic.

We continue on our way. Evening descends. We ache so badly from our longjourney that our legs can barely serve us, but we are still eight kilometers from Rubiezewicze. Sounds of shooting come from nearby woods. We are very uneasy. Every minute there are more and more shots. We turn back and come upon some kind gentiles we know. They permit us to spend the night. We are very thankful to them. It seems as though at any moment those who are shooting will come out of the woods and our lives will be ended. But the fear does not last long. We are too weary from

having walked forty-seven kilometers and we fall asleep. In the morning we rise and find ourselves once more on the road. We cover the eight kilometers quickly and are home in Rubiezewicze by nine o'clock.

Thursday, 24th July 1941 (Rubiezewicze)

It is difficult to believe that the good times are gone, that our moments of joy, the hours of studying and enjoying ourselves are past, that I must give up forever my thoughts of future goals and the fantasies I hoped to see realized. On sleepless, sunny early mornings such dreams would sometimes bring a little joy into my melancholy moods. I would never have believed that it would all disappear so soon, be cut down, burned out, orphaned in so short a time. Emptiness and desolation, saddened aching hearts, are our present constant companions. There seems to be no future for the Jewish population. There is not even any word of comfort to be heard, to lighten, if only for a few brief seconds, the sorrowing, gloom-filled Jewish heart.

For the Jew the light of day is covered with a thick veil; his roadis overgrown with tall wild grasses. For the enslaved Jew there is no longer freedom of access to things. Everything is locked away with iron locks bathed in young, warm Jewish blood and tears. The Jew's glance is downcast; not upon people does it fall but as though to penetrate into the earth. When he wishes to utter a word the mouth with which he has been endowed is shut tight. Every horizon upon which his eye rests is stained with the tears of lost children searching for their mothers in the

dense woods. Convulsed with sobbing until their little souls expired, the youngsters are now lifeless, at eternal rest. Only the quivering trees know of their death and will later on bear witness about the sacrifice of these little ones.

No human heart can remain untouched and unpained by all this. It is beyond human endurance to see so much trouble and so much suffering experienced. It is painful to see people tortured by people until life is ended. Where is human conscience, to demand the truth, to cry out?

"Man, what are you doing? Consider! Hold back your raging hand, the wild nature that prompts you to beat the Jew merely because he is a Jew!"

But this torturer is not a human being. And the Jew must turn his back and become accepting of all. For one cannot and dare not resist.

And G-d looks on and sees it all, sees how innocent people are cut down who never did any harm, not even to a fly, for they understood that it, too, has a desire for life. Such people are being killed by a shot from a gun in the heavy hand of a human with animal instincts, with the nature of a wolf. Woe to the Jewish community!

Still, we Jews do not despair. The supplications in the prayers reach the King of all Kings and He will put an end to the terrible suffering of his so tormented people. Some day the future may still brighten and joy be the companion on the road

across the Jordan and into Eretz Israel...

Yes, many will fall, there will still be many trials and much blood seen by the eyes of Jews, but we shall survive that as well. The Jew shall emerge victorious and Truth shall disclose all.

19th July 1941

A remembrance of this day's traversal of the woods, on the way home:

Sabbath, 19th of Tamuz

Of the woods' denseness....
Of the secrets of the forest
Concealed in its surroundings...
Gentle softness caressing my face,
Recounting legends of the distant greyness
And the sun rosy in early morning,
Unfolding the rosy bloom...
Coloring the trees.
Let it beckon me to lose my way,
To bathe and be refreshed
In its rosy stream!
I would, if I could, wander in an ancient forest,
Its venerable oaks veiled in a net of hidden secrets!!
Over narrow footpaths
Overgrown with flowers
That sparkle like brilliants
In the morning pearliness,
In the gentle rosiness,

Without knowing whither...

3rd August 1941 (Rubiezewicze)

On my heart there lies a sadness difficult to describe. My tired hand traces slowly. My heart is watchful, beating hard, anticipating the difficult moments which surely threaten me in the very near future. Who knows? They may come in the next few days. I recall everything that has occurred in the recent past, the sometimes solitary hours, the sometimes joyous ones spent with good acquaintances, when all the difficulties which stifle us so would disappear and beautiful words filled with rich meaning would express our happy mood.

I remember certain times when, during the late night hours, the sky would be pure light and clear, smiling beams would drop into my nicelyfurnishedlittle room. The words of quiet, friendly conversations on topics of significant content, and plans which we yearned to bring to fruition, would ring in my ears. It seemed to us then that the hours and the days might drag on slowly but that in time something better would come. It seemed that the excellent, beautiful goals would never be lost from view, but would lead us on towards realization, even though we might have to suffer in the process. Could anyone have imagined that events would arise to create different unfortunate futures for us young people, or that these worse troubles of such a terrible nature would await us? The moments we are living through at this time are filled with heavy, frequent, prolonged sighs. Sometimes Death appears before one's eyes. On such occasions the scenes of our past youth no longer flit before our

eyes. We seem now to have reached the end of everything.

But one wants to live. One craves more of youth and joy. It sometimes appears that for some of the living the end would be preferable, because life, for them, has been spoiled, shattered, ruined. In ordinary times an individual's life can lead along a variety of paths. Some see happiness in their lives, and wealth; all roads and all doors are open to such as these. For others life is a constant battle with misfortune, which stands in the way of achieving their loftier goals, while for still others life takes the form of a beautifully painted fantasy that changes with every moment. However, the present time presents little other than tragic pictures, all of them mirrored in the eyes of thousands, of millions of individuals. One's sole thought is to survive this painful, oppressive time and to see something better before one's eyes.

Monday, 18th August 1941 (Rubiezewicze)

It is difficult to believe (and one doesn't want to keep such a thoughtinone's mind,or to dwell on the idea) that it isquite possible I am going to be permanently separated from my most understanding friend in life, my older sister. I do not want to verify--G-d forbid it!--her annihilation.

My heart grows melancholy when I imagine such tragic scenes, when my thoughts turn to losing those of my own blood. How strongly there beats in my head the memory of those days of old which I spent with her! How slowly the reminders of many difficulties we experienced now file by, experiences which, despite the

hardships, led to an improvement in our lives! How delightful our conversations were, how great our hope that our bad times would pass and happier moments arrive, when we would hear much good about each other even though we might be far apart.

Actually, such moments did occur while we were in two different regions and the only connecting thread between us was a letter. Then we could keep from each other the more oppressive matters of life. We wrote of the happier times and of how our youthful days were going by like a beautiful dream,like our free days in the park among the flowers. We never fully expressed our troubles to the other in writing, but stressed the positive, for there were difficult times to endure and we did not wish to burden each other's hearts.

Indeed, those days went by with a strange haste, rushing along like a swift-flowing stream. Now, because of the circumstances of war, I have been separated from her. Dreadful questions and thoughts pull us, now to the right, now to the left. One does not want to believe that you, dear sister, have fallen victim to such a time.

No, you have not fallen.

You are alive and are enduring hunger,cold, loneliness. You are sleepless, my friend, wandering in some strange town or village, or, perhaps,unprotected among the changing shadows of some dark wood.

Perhaps you are being envious of me and are thinking that your

sister is alive. Or is she dead? No, my faithful sister, your younger friend is alive and is now in her own home, where the best of wings, the wings of her parents, are spread over her and there are sisters, brothers, friends and acquaintances. So far my fate has been good. But the fate of our people Israel as a whole is tragic.

And you, my best, most understanding sister, where are you? Who is your protector and guardian, who provides you with a livelihood? Perhaps it is some good people, while the one and only G-d protects you from harm?

I call out to you!

But you are far away and do not hear me. It is only silently that I can converse with you, and my prayer to G-d flows softly from my lips.

What I ask of G-d is: Please tell her that we are alive. Let her imagine and believe it. Transmit to us in return, dearest relative, the firm message that you are alive, that you are somewhere on this bright earth, perhaps leading a calm life in a place where even now the sun is bringing you pleasure with its rays.

But no! The imagination of people wavers. It is always changing direction as it flows. Now it says one thing, then it says something else, something dark and dreadful.

How happy I would feel if she were here with all of us! And if it comes to pass that we must become victims, we yet would all be together and know that we came to a common end. But the present reality is otherwise. Now that we are separated one from the other and long distances part us for long periods of time from our own home, there is constant, disturbing anxiety which gives us no rest. The awareness of the absence of one person from among all those in the home is insistent and suffocating.

How much more heartbroken are the parents who have no news about their own child and who cannot help but think tragic thoughts of their beautiful young tree! Sometimes they think she may be among the living and at others... For they keep hearing that large numbers of people are dying of constant hunger,that many roads are closed to them, that they are locked into ghettos until quietly, as morning comes on, they expire, the final breaths brought on by hunger and craving for water. Such is the end, in these days of war, of many individuals.

Wednesday, 20th August 1941 (Rubiezewicze)

The days are now shorter, the nights, longer. The sun still sends its warm rays. From time to time a quiet, dense rain passes through. The grain is being harvested from the fields. That is the program for the peasant's life right now. He always knows what his work is to be, for it is always the same. For the Jew right now the day has a different aspect. Every morning we must report to the work-assignment place from where we, too, go off to work. Whether it is to labor on the roads, near the bridges, or elsewhere, everything has the self-same purpose: to torment the Jew, to oppress him more and more.

This morning I woke very early with the thought that I must not be late to work. Dawn had only just begun. One could observe the darkness of the night slowly give way to daylight. It seemed that the morning came from a distance to shine through the nocturnal clouds. Outdoors all was quiet. Everything was still asleep and dreaming pleasant dreams. The dreams of the night had already disappeared from before my eyes, but as I reflected that all around me still slumbered, my thoughts returned briefly to those vanished dreams.

I took my diary in hand. The sun was now beginning to shine. I turned the previously filled pages in the hope of tempering the effect of my present hardships, for we are tortured daily as though we were slaves like those in Egypt long ago. Tears of suffering choke us and dictate that we calm and compose ourselves.

I read about those times when I worked and felt happy,

experienced beautiful days of youth, spent hours or months with others: times like those I enjoyed with a friend like Waszcilina. She was like a mother to me. We lived through both good and bad times and would always comfort and encourage each other. We gave no thought to the possibility that through war a sudden end would come to our friendship. But we were separated without even taking leave of each other. We did not press each other's hands in the final moments before we were parted forever. Who knows where she may be, whether she is still alive and whether she, too, might be dedicating a brief moment of remembrance to thoughts of me and to the question of whether I am alive?

Sunday, 7th September 1941

A long time has passed. Two decades have been counted. At times, with tear-filled eyes, mention has been made about how long periods of time go by without providing opportunity to see one's own children, when the road that should tie mutual blood together is blocked by tall, overgrown grasses, when moments of one's childhood must be forgotten and the city where one was born becomes where one must later suffer and survive many trying hardships. One must forget entirely about times past, about many familiar paths in young forests, about all that was beloved and precious. All must be encompassed slowly in clear thoughts, then forgotten.

Yes, it is sad to imagine experiencing such a parting while one is still young in years. But man comes through everything, becomes inured to anything, and thinks that things should be as

they are and not otherwise. And today, when the early morning was cold and frosty, when the pavement stones were wet from the passing rain, when fleeting thoughts were reflected upon, when I did not have to go to work near the bridge, in a quiet moment I perceived the unexpected sound of a single question:

"How are you?"

Then, the warm exchange of kisses between mother, brother and sister.

"Mother, how are you?" And then the second question:

"Zelde, my child, how are you?"

It truly cuts at the heart to realize that for such a long time, there was no meeting, and now, in these bad times, we see each other. On the one hand, there is pleasure in the fact of the meeting. On the other hand, there is sadness because we Jews are in such a grave situation. A wave of misfortune and calamity is engulfing the Jewish population. The heart is petrified upon hearing of the repeated scenes of heavy tragedy, or when one sees with one's own eyes the felling of young, flourishing trees, when thousands of innocent souls are hurried directly to Heaven. Cut down are so many who yearn to live and to build and to create!

Yes! Forgotten lovely experiences are now repeatedly recalled, moments that looked to the future, to beautiful days ahead, moments when extravagant but not unrealistic aspirations were visualized, when everything was attractive and we were filled with pride and endurance. We looked the rapidly approaching

future directly in the eye. Everything was enveloped in a rosy glow like that cast by a projector. Our feelings were entirely pure. There was much to be proud of.

But the threads which bound the present day to those coming on were too weak, could not hold fast and lead into the future and the realization of dreams, and they were cut off, leaving in our hands only the short ends. Perhaps they have not disappeared for long: Courage and hope must not be lost, the cut threads tell us. There will yet come a time when the thoughts secreted within each sufferer will be seen openly and everything will be revealed. Bygone dreams will pass before one's eyes: earlier plans and dreams of achievement will be reawakened in all their beauty, joy and vitality. But the footfall of the bloody past will echo continuously to cause concern in the future about the days being lived through now.

Rosh Hashana, Monday, 22nd September 1941

Great changes become evident as I turn the diary pages recording events experienced about two years ago. The only conclusion one can draw, considering both past and present, individual life and community as a whole, is this: Ever and always man suffers. He constantly finds himself inside an encircling chain of oppressive, inexplicable matters. He has two kinds of thoughts: imagination, and plans concerning actual procedure in life. This leaves him always in a state of uncertainty. Why are things so and not otherwise? he asks himself.

But these characteristics of thought belong to the past.

Analysing the present state of thought among people yields quite a different attitude, especially with respect to the future, achievement and career. In these stormy times questions about today, about the day one is living, are uppermost. All secondary problems are erased from daily life. A person's mind becomes impaired, far from beautiful thoughts. One goal is dominant: to maintain life.

If I live, the will to actualize my former thoughtswill surely be reawakened and they will become familiar and desirable again. In the life of today there is one road, and on it two pictures keep alternating before my eyes: death...life.... For a moment I seem dead, but then the thought comes that I am still alive.

Another season of cold is coming on to replace the lovely warm summer days which were a comfort to the suffering people. The fields and gardens were filled with good things and one could be outdoors and sleep under the clear, starlit sky. And now that too is gone and the warmth has disappeared along with the good days. For some, hunger adds to the general sense of apprehension and insecurity. At times, however, you hope and you lend courage to each other.

Thinking about last Rosh Hashana, sad thoughts, none of which bolster us for life, again come up. Although I was then among strangers, away from my family, I was still free; I was not a slave, not in service to anyone. With the passing of a year my situation has worsened. Nevertheless, G-d be thanked, people in our town really should not complain. And on this Rosh Hashana,

when all the inhabitants of the town are gathered in the synagogue, they are remembering the towns that were burnt down and that the synagogues there--if theydid remain standing--are empty. Today everyone is shedding rivers of tears on account of the destruction, the unbridled persecution that prevails and the terrible troubles. Everyone's heart, as a result, is broken to bits from thinking about what can become of people with the passage of a short period of time: poor, homeless, hungry and lonely, separated from their children who were killed by bombs. And right now they are all praying to G-d; their cries resound as they plead with Him to improve the condition of the Jews in the new year so that there will not be any more new graves. Enough innocent persons have fallen. Grant us a good, a joyful year. And may the passing of the old year take with it, far, far away, the trials of the present....

Saturday, 27th September 1941 (Rubiezewicze)

At a bad time, when it seems that the clouds in the sky hang down very close to earth, slow, quiet, melancholy melodies are heard from the few remaining birds. If one seeks in the voices of the birds a song for man, a few drops of imagined joy, it seems that from the tiny bills there flow deliberately paced, faint utterances of words of joy: Take courage and rejoice, wipe away the overwhelming, unasked-for tears from your eyes, clear them of the thickfilms of sadly tragic life, open wide the receptivity of your ears; hear the good tidings we little birds soaring in the sullied air will bring you about the salvation that has come for you. These words of annunciation, which are so delicate, so

gentle and happy, restore to health many thousands of broken hearts in the midst of a heavy fog in a night of darkness, when the cold is cruel and brutal, when thoughts are so hopeless. In that thick dark night warmly smiling stars appear to drive away the terrible darkness and chase it hurriedly beneath the piled clouds; the moon emerges and with a greater Power illuminates the blackness and it is light.

It is in such a dramatic manner that the prediction of deliverance would affect bleeding, mutilated, waiting Jewry. How painful to think that while it is fantastically joyous it is not practical, not realistic. But perhaps my thoughts about its being unrealistic are misleading. It could indeed be valid and G-d's will might yet be perceived if one could look at all of this with other eyes.

While under the influence of these very pessimistic intrusive thoughts, when it seems I have found some comfort even if it is in a lovely fantasy, something that is not real, I take up the book Znakher /Pretender/. It describes the happy life of a professor who is much respected and honored and who believes there will never be an end to his happy days. His love for his wife, who is less educated than he, as well as for his one and only child, is boundless.

When the eighth anniversary of his wedding arrives, the wife leaves him, disappearing forever from his sight. The child is left fatherless, and her longing for him, her memories, the questions she asks her mother, are all extraordinary. With the

passage of the years she forgets it all and begins to love her second father. She is brought up kindly and well, in a forest where the rays of sunlight are scarcely perceptible among the tall, massed trees of various kinds. Time passes and mother and daughter are brought sorrow by the death of the second husband. Now their life is overwhelmingly difficult. The mother, too, dies of her troubles and the child is now left solitary. The author then describes her new way of life and how she finds she has great love for an elderly man. She does not know he is her real father but is very devoted to him.

Reading this book has taught me a great deal, especially that bad, very oppressive times can be followed by good, joy-filled moments. The story gave me the courage and endurance to help me survive the present times and to await better ones.

Wednesday, 1st October 1941. Yom Kipper

We awaited the day of Yom Kippur with much sadness and prayer to G-d. It is a day different from all others. It is concerned with charting a good and pleasureable year. How sad and broken are the many tens of thousands of hearts being poured out before G-d, hearts that find no comfort in the present heavy darkness. These times make one think that all is ended, that the world no longer exists, that the people still remaining live in cruel trouble and are teetering between death and life. They dream of something better in their lifetime, but if that is not to come, they wish for their dismal life to end as soon as possible. Each one sees with his own eyes, or in imagination, the recent tragic

scenes. Each one's human feelings are transformed by the simply inhuman events, the misleading contradictory ideas of the present times and the inability to make sense of them. The pervading wish is to find some spark of comfort in the songs of the little birds flitting about at sunrise. But how quiet their notes are, and how unkind it is of nature to obscure our hearing them: The wind is wandering about, its low moan breaking up the softly sounding notes from on high. All else about is silent.

And all else about is mean and brutal.... The quietly remembered scenes of times past are cruelly dispelled. The vivid but now superfluous, mourned pictures disappear into the grey distance, leaving the mind occupied with thoughts of the present and its perceived realities. All about is shattered, destroyed and burned. All is obstructed by fresh graves, a virtual cemetery. Dark, menacing clouds cover everything. The entire suroundings are weeping and crying out and asking:

Why is this so terrible and merciless price being exacted of us?
Why must so many innocent young people fall?
Why do we see before our eyes but one outcome, one path, one end?
Slowly and laboriously the reply comes: Yes, Father, we have sinned heavily before Thee. We have, many of us, often turned from Thy way, forsaken it. Jewish daughters have changed their

outlook considerably and told their children G-d no longer is. They have instructed them in other theories, taught them a different moral code. They have abandoned the true teachings and morality, and they have endeavored to obliterate Thy name even among the faithful. But this punishment is excessively cruel. Extend Thy mercy towards us really soon and let there be an end to this fearful bloodletting, so that truly joyous times may arrive for the tortured, lonely people Israel.

Tuesday, 14th October 1941 (Rubiezewicze) Sukkot

This is a very frosty morning. All the roofs are white. The earth, too, is frostcovered. It is difficult to believe that such cold is taking over so early. Today is Simkhat Torah, but everyone's heart is heavy. Everyone is filled with the pain of this tragic period. This is not the time to enjoy the holiday, reality tells us. We are obliged to go to work. And this morning, when one would more or less like to reflect on the meaning of the holiday, we are commanded to report for work at digging potatoes in Filsu [?]. On the one hand there is satisfaction in the thought that one is still able to go to work. On the other hand there is sorrow as one contemplates the general Jewish plight. One's mood occasionally turns to marveling at our enduring the tremendous amount of present day suffering. Even so, this is quickly forgotten on mornings like these, when we all gather to go to work, and all of us together are reminded of our situation with every plant we dig up.

Yet, everything may still some day change for the better. The

reluctance to labor as slaves of our enemies, who would gladly see even worse conditions heaped upon us, is great. Nevertheless, a comforting thought rises secretly from the heart: Do not weep, children of Israel, it tells us, for the day will yet dawn when everything may change for the better. The bright rays of the sun will commence to shine for you and your youthful, beautiful songs and prayers in praise of the Almighty will ring out strong and clear and brimming with pride. We must hope that that day will arrive momentarily.

Sunday, 26th October 1941 (Rubiezewicze)

Every moment of what we are experiencing now is marked by strained behavior. Every hour we live through presents us with many gruesome hardships, contains one and the same message and brings doubt about life. It is difficult to be alive and to survive in these dark, oppressive times. Questions difficult to ponder and to resolve weigh upon us. What is going to happen next? Shall we really survive these times? Shall we indeed live to experience joy while we are still young? If we do not believe this the alternative leads to the decision to put an end to one's life.

As one listens to the reports of the wild, barbaric deeds of those man-eating Hitlerites in the city of Koidanov, not far from us, one shudders and is pervaded by deathly fear. With what deep sighs we hear the accounts of the kind of death man suffers at the hands of men! On a lovely morning, as the sun was just beginning to rise, a death-presaging black cloud suddenly appeared. When all the Jews of the city had been gathered to-

gether, when the long graves had been dug and prepared and stood open before the eyes of the mothers, fathers and little children, they looked at them wide-eyed, not knowing what was to happen in the ensuing moments. Then were heard pain-filled sobs and farewells to one's children. The hearts of those looking on from afar, who could not bear to see the terrible weeping and hear the cries of the thousands of people awaiting the first shot and the striking bullet, and could not watch the dropping of the other people and especially of the children, were yet too strong. Those shot had all been taken from their homes and from all their possessions and had no will to leave such a beautiful, bright world and go to their eternal rest.

Some sought ways to hide. From the hiding places, too, they were led tothe slaughter. Still others ran into the wood,held their breath as they hid behind the bushes, and thought fearfully of the possibilities of survival. The thousands of people who fell are now at rest. The long graves have been closed again, but the earth will not rest. One can see it heave, as if to say:

Dig away the covering and let out these people who have just fallen, whose blood will not be still and finds no peace in the earth.

It is difficult to listen to these accounts of tragic actual events. Our own end could be the same on any coming day. May the one G-d preserve us from such harm and may He bring death to the attackers who quell their wild feelings with the blood of thousands of human beings.

Saturday, 1st November 1941 (Rubiezewicze)

Soaked in human tears the static, rosy-tinged skies seem to conceal many a secret from unknowing man. On quiet evenings, as the sun sets, there seem to be hints suggestive of improvement in the present Jewish situation.

Every day we live through nowadays is like the one before, dominated by much sad thought of what the coming morning will bring us that will say something about the important question of staying alive. To the Jew every dusk, which falls quickly as if to emphasize the brevity of the passing day, is impenetrable.

Will the coming night permit genuine rest for the weary person, or will it bring pervasive unrest and waiting in painful suspense caused by the shooting with which our enemies are disturbing the quiet of the night and arousing in us even greater apprehension regarding the fate of the already so dispirited Jewish people? The ominous dark nights drag on interminably and in their stillness it seems to us there is a call to the slaughter, that somewhere far away there is insistent talk of our extermination.

Of wiping the Jewish people from the world arena.

Our young hearts are still pulsing. At times a mislaid fantastic thought breaks through laboriously: Perhaps we shall survive our present stressful situation. It is with much pain and many regrets that we invoke the word "life", so beautiful, so precious and, right now, so alien.

Itseemssuperfluousto dream such dreams...

Life seems to be standing like a shade in a distant, grey wood, asthough listening to the echo coming from among motionless tall trees far, far away and calling:

"Bestir yourselves, suffering people! Be proud and look with open eyes at the future! In it you will read the omen predicting your ongoing existence."

In this frame of mind one seems to see,
And would like to pursue, the omen
Into the dense depths of the forest,
To pursue the echo;
One would like to run endlessly
To drink in the words [promising?] life,
To stumble among the needling pines
Searching for a bit of consolation.
And thinking that the promise could come true.

But the environment is silent. It makes no move,
Nor does it concur in the horrible tide of troubles
Engulfing us throughout large territories.

The waves of unfathomable questions continue.
Will we survive? And, someday, in peace, tell about it?
The persistent response enters quietly:
It is difficult to foresee how things will occur.

Sometimes I recall the past, which was filled with striving towards one specific goal; my memory yields up impressions of beautifully spent youthful days, of luminous hours-long moonless walks as night approached. Many problems were touched upon, most

of them pertinent to youth. How often happiness filled me as I became aware of the youthfulness and freshness streaming in my live arteries!

But now? Yes, now!

Now it is painful to remember.
Now it seems I amalready old, that our youth
Is already far, far away and will disappear.

Stilled is the former gay laughter.
Everything is dominated by sadness and disappointment
In the world, which is so beautiful,
So great and wide, so bright!
But for us it is narrow and dark and sealed off,
Leaving but a single road--to our end.

Wednesday, 12th November 1941

The night hours dragged on for a long, long time, for night falls very early and quickly; the sun sets in a long, glowing, rose-violet stream, leaving behind a moon beaming down upon nature and lending a final ornamentation to the brightness of the night above the softly murmuring birchwoods.

The birds have already sunk into a gentle sleep and are dreaming of the frosty morning to come, of how they will circle early in the clear, cold air and then descend to earth to find food and peep in through the high, already frosted-over windows of human habitations to bring tidings of the atmosphere prevalent outside. From the distance there is heard the light splashing of the little river likewise streaming purposefully within its banks.

The footsteps of the human night watch are heard. All is so quiet, so tinged with melancholy. There is a marked silence dominating everything and disturbing the person sitting indoors. One goes to bed at five, for it is forbidden to kindle any light. I retire with the sad, ever present thought, which clamors until far into the night and penetrates deeply, deeply, and demands and calls and asks: Where is the truth? My every limb trembles at the idea that any minute can bring an end to my young life. Thoughts soar so high, then abruptly drop low again at the realization that everything is being destroyed, is being brought to a fearful, untimely end. It is difficult to fall asleep. My thoughts dart back and forth until I am weary. Finally, I sleep. The hope is that the morning will bring decided improvement, that the coming day will truly bring joy and human dignity, that the bright sun will once again shine and all will be well forever.

Friday, 14th November 1941

There is no gladnessin life at present; there is not even any feeling for it, or any inducement to impose self-control to effect a change in one's attitude. The times are too sad and too pervaded by the echoes of the already vanished cries of the people who have fallen. The downcast glances of the Jewish people are too fixed and too strained now to be distracted and to smile at the happier masses passing by. The present suffering is too great and too grueling and causes [even] proud young hearts to be depressed, so that they cannot find it within themselves to summon up a happier mood. Long, very long are the reverberations of the vanished voices of the felled young trees who strove for a

wonderful, happy life. New victims arouse added feelings of sympathy in hearts already heavy, broken and increasingly impassive, burdened anew daily by painful experiences.

Daytime seems superfluous to life as it is at present. Day's brightness and grandeur are tantalizing. One needs nothing. A single answer to everything surfaces quietly:
Your good days have already passed by, fled hurriedly never to return.

Everyone senses the terrible uncertainty in the present situation. All roads are blocked. It is a great, wide world, but there is nowhere for us to go. Every known, familiar little path has become so unrecognizable and alien, it often seems that /although/ one is following it one is lost, and there is always a dark mist before one's eyes.

Occasionally one has the idea that perhaps tomorrow will be better. But,no! The morning arrives and brings even more sad news of more who are persecuted, of more who have been killed or who have suffered still greater degradation!!!
Still more profound degradation.

Several hours pass and, G-d be thanked, my brother arrives unhurt. Everyone else returned home today marked by beatings with the blackjack. I feel particularly broken today, ill both because of the experiences of the times and because I have caught cold. I am very dizzy. I lie in bed and would like to fall asleep and forget for a moment how bad the times are. How much I would like to survive it all and live to see better conditions in

happier days, when one could feel more human. I should like to sleep until it has all passed and then awake, albeit still tired, and see that all has vanished with the passing of time. Even at this moment, when I am feeling so shattered, the thought runs alongside: I should still like to live and enjoy the days of my youth and be a witness to how it will all end. Will G-d really succeed in destroying all the Jews? No, that is difficult to believe. The punishment is already great enough: so many have already fallen. To G-d, all is possible, and he could yet do something good for the small number of Jews remaining....

26th November 1941

It is difficult to describe the present sinister times. There are no expressions capable of characterizing life's debased aspect.

Each day has its oppressive experiences.
Each hour, its peculiar terror.
Every minute, its heartbreaking sigh from deep within.
Difficult, very difficult it is to observe with one's own eyes such actions as foretell continuing decline, dark ways, falling shadows. There is no way that will lead out to peace.

Yes, everything points towards annihilation. The sky lowers close to the earth and it seems as though it wants to take up everyone's soul and really put an end to everyone's life. All of us are already lost anyway. Why does G-d see all this and remain silent?! See Jewish blood being spilled at every step and turn, see proud Jewish honor being completely degraded? Where is His

mercy, even if it is not for Jews as Jews but as His creatures, His people?

There is no response. Silence prevails. The entire environment is as if in a faint, except that there can still be heard the deathfilled voices of the expiring Jews calling and pleading in weak cries for a last bit of help, which does not come. It brings to mind the similar tragic moment when a terrible storm-wind is raging on the sea, when tremendous, brutal waves are striving to destroy the quietly gliding ship filled with people who are aware that in another second Death will overtake them. In

thatmoment the drowning person attempts to grasp a slender straw bobbing gently on the water and he feels: Perhaps I will be helped after all: Perhaps the weak little straw will come out victorious.

Such is the picture we see in our life today, at this tragic moment when enemies bent on destroying us are descending upon us from all sides.

Our struggle with them is constant. And victorious in the dark night is the comforting hope that we shall survive it all.

The imagination paints a rich picture.

But the reality around us is truly debased, a condition just the opposite to that in the imagination. We are standing in a sea of blood and uncertainty: Death, or Life? And suddenly, it seems, one inclines one's head far downward and is drowned in the ocean of trouble,in the raging waves of blood. The dream, then, is to have life come to an end once and for all.

But no! One takes stock and finds that blood is still coursing in one's veins, that there is still a slow pulse, that the brain is active and one can still move.

At that point one seems to curse himself and the day he was born, the moment he opened his eyes and first beheld this bright world.

Nature is lamenting
The Jewish catastrophe.
The woods are all weeping.

The sun is shining,
Yet, it seems,
Shedding tears
Of pain-filled sympathy.

It appears to be bringing joy with its light. But no, a thick shadow blocks the sun and the bright rays do not reach us; instead we receive sinister prophetic messages: forebodings of suffering come to us, and of upheaval and terror.

Apparently, everyone regards the Jews with animosity and scorn, the idea being that Jews are not people.

The expectation of liberation from enslavementfades when one realizes that all the years of hoping and dreaming about improvement have not brought any. Alongside the oppressive thoughts there are still dreams of deliverance in the future. But no! It will not come. We shall all remain unfulfilled and thus, sadly, our tortured lives will come to a close.

Forthe wrath-suffering Jew
The gates to happiness
Are barred with strong locks.
Predictions of happiness are snarled in chains.
For so long now there has been no joy for us;
Now the end has come and
It shall be our liberation!!!

Thursday, 27th November 1941

Today, everyone is even more downhearted and immersed in laborious thought because there is persistent talk that we are to be

confined in a Ghetto. This threatens complete separation from freedom, much suffering, many severe daily blows. On the agenda now is the question of transferring all Jewish property to Iwieniec. Everyone now sees his future painted in black and dark colors. Every heart is deeply pained. Everyone regards his present life with despairing eyes; each day's confrontations are more tragic and filled with even more depressing sights than occurred the day before. Out on the street right now there is much noise, much hubbub. Each person asks the other for the latest news. The reply is that our situation is catastrophic.

Father is not at home today. He has gone to the country. And because at twelve o'clock tonight every Jew must report at the assembly point and may not be represented by anyone else, my brother and I are going to fetch him. Our sense of urgency is very great. We are already on our way.

It is dreadfully cold. The sun's rays are icy as they stream down.

There is quiet all around us. The road is quite deserted. It seems as though no one is ever out there. We walk fast. Suddenly we have the feeling we are being pursued, that we are hearing cries of "Halt!" The forest remains silent. Its branches are decked with delicate, glistening bits of snow that seem to look upon us, the passersby, with sympathy. The road out to the country is long. Nevertheless, after about an hour we are at our destination. We marvel at the calm and quiet of the rural area, at the peaceful life of the peasant; he knows of no difficulties.

After a few minutes we are back on the road, three of us this time. Our impressions are as before.

And in the space of an hour we have arrived home. By now it is evening, the sun is setting slowly and semi-darkness is settling over all. Everyone prepares for the night. The sky is watched over by stars, the frost is intensifying and there is crunching underfoot. The street is quiet. The hours pass very quickly until in the silence of the night the clock is heard to strike: Twelve.

Everyone is now awake. Preparations are made for the journey. Everyone's heart is a-quiver. Let us hope we will at least all return home safely. Out in the streets there is a noisy bustling. Long rows of wagons stand ready to depart. The night darkness is intense, but several long searchlight beams break through for a momentary illumination, then are incorporated into the blackness again.

The brightness of the beam as it falls upon us is terrifying.

A rifle is fired nearby. The shot echoes and carries its sound far, far, and leaves traces of deep-seated fear in every heart.

The cold grows more and more intense. The breeze hums a little nighttime melody that calls to the guards, telling them the time has come to get under way. The command to start out is heard and then the wagons begin to move.

The street is black with departing people. Those who have remained behind are ordered away. Sobbing and preoccupied with

thoughts about the deteriorating Jewish situation, they turn towards home. Then the street is quiet once more and the town has an air of desertion about it.

I enter the house, where the warm, familiar atmosphere and my mother's tender love enfold me. It is already one o'clock but no one can sleep. Dozens of questions waver in my mind and give me no rest.

Slumber remains inhibited for a long, long time
Until, without noticing it, I finally do fall asleep....

Monday, 1st December 1941

Today We Became a Ghetto

The morning was clear and warmish. The night had passed quickly. The sun came up in the east with a rosy light and began to scatter its scarcely noticeably frosty rays about. The inhabitants of the city woke with sad smiles on their lips, looked out at their surroundings through lightly iced windows covered with the jeweled frost-flowers which invest the pervasive winter cold with its primary claim to distinction.

The horizons seem close by and low as I stand in the valley beside the half-frozen rivulet. The stream mirrors my form as I stand there. I feel that my former vision of the distant, unclear future has greatly deteriorated and my fate, which is clothed in thick layers of sadness and depression, has taken a turn for the worse.

The atmosphere is bruised and bloodied,

Nature looks discouragingly at the accursed Jewish fate.
Heavy glances are cast upon the already fallen leaves.
On the silent cemetery the branches press downward.

The environment is inimical; the roads are covered with snow; the wires sag conspicuously. Sad and melancholy are the movements of the little birds which occasionally flit down and, seemingly with much pity, seek to comfort her who does not know what awaits suffering humanity.

Everything here weeps and cries out to G-d to withdraw this frightful edict which is in force. From everything about, tears seem to be flowing, rivers of hot, searing tears which tear apart even the healthy, vibrant heart.

Tragically, the hour has struck which designates the end
For the inhabitant who remained where he was:
The day has arrived when we are summoned to gather together, leaving the homes where we have long been established.

We are being deprived of the freedom with which man was endowed.
All life's radiance is being extinguished for us;
The seven heavens are barred to us.
They are obscured by dark clouds which, it seems,
The awesome prayers of the suffering Jewish masses
Are unable to penetrate.
One breathes heavily during these final moments
In the free air.
The imprisoned Jew looks regretfully

At the wide, free fields and woods
Standing silently witnessing all,
Watching mutely as the Jew goes under
And listening to the distressed, laborious beating
Of everyone's ruined heart.

It was dark last night; infrequently a few stars broke through the blackness. Everyone was quietly asleep, dreaming dreams of the freedom to come.

It was during those nocturnal hours that knocking could be heard rousing the people. Then came shouts directing them to come out of their homes and move over to the Ghetto "where they belong."

At that moment
All projected plans for the future were torn up.
Stamped out
Were the fantasies concerning beautiful goals.
Everything was discontinued, ruined.
The dreams hastened off
Into the uncharted distance,
Their flight finally halted
In those deserts and wastelands
Where everything is lifeless
And enveloped
In tantalizing rays of complete calm.

No one intervened in our predicament.
All of us are now in the Ghetto.

Night fell quickly. The sun set precipitously. From a distance long lines of Jews could be seen approaching from Naliboki, Dekhevno, Kamieniec, Walcz, Rotovo. Everyone sighed wearily. All our hearts grieved at the thought that at such a cold, dark hour people were being taken from their own homes. A collapsed fate. Little children were heard crying. The bundles were tossed down and lookers-on were chased from the street. In the space of a few hours everything grew quiet and now everyone is under the roof of a dwelling.

6th December 1941

A Fire Occurred at Midnight Last Night

This Saturday turns out to be different from last. Last Saturday everyone was still in his usual place and thinking constantly of the times that were to come. Today that matter is also off the agenda.

Everyone is more or less accommodated here in the Ghetto, although every place is crowded. No matter what home one enters, one finds noise and hubbub. The decor in every room has undergone a change. One is struck immediately by the improvised pallets. Everywhere, in every corner, bundles are heaped up. Everywhere children are crying. The little ones are hungry and are asking for bread.

Everyone deplores the present situation. People stay cooped up, hearing nothing and seeing nothing of the outside. They have traveled far from their former homes. Those Jewish residences are now empty and forsaken. Each house stands solitary; no one visits there. Each is sealed with a heavy lock. The yard, the well--all is lifeless; there is no one moving about in the vicinity. The sun directs its rays there as usual; morning waxes, [day] wanes; night falls. Nature proceeds with its regular schedule. But the life of the usual inhabitant of that place is different now. Now the day passes more painfully, and even the occasional forced laugh is colored by suffering and heavy thoughts.

The pre-dawn hours passed slowly and the day of the Sabbath

arrived. Everyone awoke with the thought that the Sabbath day would surely bring some gladness to the few Jews gathered in the ghetto.

I spent the afternoon with my friends, the Alles's. We had not seen each other for some time and hadn't talked. We took note of how each one had gotten settled. We touched on the principal question of the situation now engulfing us all, and parted with the comforting hope that things would be better on the next Sabbath.

The day passed quickly, pushed along with talk and hoping, with remembrances of better times, and night arrived. There was some penetrating frost and the wind whistled. When the clock struck eight we went to bed. (We have with us a family of six persons, the Karans [Kahans?], from Naliboki.) I fell asleep quickly, and did not sense the approaching event.

Over at the outskirts of the ghetto, where the houses end, some people were still not asleep. They still had a fire going in their stove and were baking pancakes. The sparks glowed so long in the chimney that a fire finally broke out. When the clock struck twelve Mother awoke and saw a fierce red reflected in all the windows.

"There is a fire somewhere," she thought at once. We all got out of bed immediately and went out of doors. The night was bright, illuminated by the large fire. We could see that the danger was nearby. Our hearts beating furiously, we began packing up things and taking them to Aunt Sara's. The fire grows

larger and fiercer. Everyone is packing. Three houses are aflame: the Levitassers', the Mats's, and the Kowarskis'. Everyone hurries to help put out the flames. Everyone is carrying water. My one wish is not to have to move.

The fire burns for many long hours. The air is pierced by the sound of shots being fired by the police. They are driving unwilling persons to work. Dawn approaches. The fire abates. The [three] houses burned down, but no others caught fire. At last the flames are extinguished. Our hearts are lighter: We are able to remain in our own place. We take our bundles back into the house, happy that we suffered nothing worse than fright.

The night passed, as did the fire. Day came!!!

Monday, 15th December 1941

Chanuka--The Second Candle

Yes, the days of Chanuka have finally arrived to remind us of the miracle in that other historic period when darkening rays fell upon the Jews, when from all sides a rushing wave bringing trouble and evil decrees converged upon them, when cruel people were bent on destroying the Jewish nation and setting fire to the Holy Temple. But the dark times passed quickly and the situation was altered.

Yes, those years have gone by. Everything about those difficult days, days that now belong to the grey past, has been recorded. What remains as a remembrance of that past are the pages of history.

Now those pages are turning once again, being authenticated in contemporary Jewish life. Those scenes of old are being reproduced now, and in even greater proportions. Our current experiences are much more oppressive and exceed by far the tragedies of old.

The present-day fate is much darker. Everyone is imprisoned in the Ghetto and very sad. It seems as though everything is at an end. One has the feeling his life is hanging by a hair. It is hard and quite unnatural to contemplate it all.

Nature, on the other hand, is quite mild at this time. Happily, she casts her purple and violet rays as though trying to convey some message of joy to suffering humanity.

However, the way is long and the words which might bring us favorable portent remain unspoken and do not reach our ears, which are ever eager to hear them. The fog in the atmosphere delays the message, eradicates the words.

SATURDAY, 20th December 1941

These are difficult, cruel times. Hope and comfort seem to have completely disappeared. Daily thinking is dominated by thoughts which lead to perpetual sadness. One's own heart listens compassionately to the suffering in the Ghetto of a great many people calling out silently for help. The knowledge of all the unforgettable things left behind, left abandoned and alone because of the new turn in our fate, is almost suffocating.

At such a time it is possible to distinguish everyone's character

by his response to the needs of his neighbors. The entirely disheartened one, who has nothing with which to nourish his child as it begs for the gift of a piece of bread, who is wrestling with his own thoughts while he is concerned with the general situation says:

"How sad it is for him who is in possession of all his strength yet has no opportunity to earn anything anywhere, is obliged to witness all this and must resort to begging from people who do not understand why the next person is dejected."

There are some people who are sensitive to others, who will share the last of what they have. Their sympathy derives from the fact that they are themselves under stress and have in the past experienced great hardships.

At present each day is similar to the next one. Each is difficult. There is no change for the better. The Ghetto is truly dreadful.

The crowding in every house is great. Everyone hopes that the future will bring many improvements, but in the meantime it is very difficult to wait.

Today's day passed quickly. A group of us girls talked together and the time went fast. We did not want to part from each other, but night was falling fast and it is forbidden to be outdoors after dark. Thus this Saturday went quickly. May the next bring true joy to our Ghetto!!!

Monday, 22d December 1941

I awoke very early. The clock struck three. I was unwilling to believe it was that early and imagined it was later. I looked out through the draped window. The sky was very cloudy to the east and it was slightly foggy. Here and there, light colors broke through. The ground was covered with a passing frost and all wetness had dried up. Silence reigned. Everyone else was asleep and oblivious to everything. What had awakened me were the thoughts dominating my dreams. My eyes had been closed a few evening hours but they quickly returned to wakefulness and further thinking.

Yes, lovely imagined reminiscent pictures of the past were my companions during the quickly passing night hours. Painted in lovely colors were those beautiful days that were marked by the proud intention to realize in actual future life the thoughts one was thinking.

Trampled underfoot in the darkness of the night were the current degrading experiences which lead onto the road of depressed feelings. Heavy, suppressed sighs and moans bore witness to what had come to pass. Any happier thought was locked up as though by iron bars. It hovered very far away and waited for the right opportunity: Perhaps I would take control of myself and adopt a feeling of lightening solace and intrinsic hope. But the happy thought, sad to say, did not appear:

How was it possible, indeed, to build such a frame of mind

while one had to look upon and experience such troubles?

In my mind once again I imagined those full days of work and study, days which had so easily been forgotten. Now they came to life once more. I could feel my former eagerness and devotion to the purpose at hand. For a little while I had only memories which spoke of the beauty of the past. I recalled days I enjoyed and youthful conversations when I felt I stood on the threshold to achievement, when I envisioned, as if it were attained, my dream that many who were imbued with humane ethics, refinement and conscientiousness would gather together to study. Oh, how I would etch deeply into my mind every word that was uttered in those days! If my glance met that of a loving individual, I would love that person not because of superficial brightness or thoughtfulness, not with an eye to the future. Rather, I would love that person as one genuinely possessed of pure feeling and a human, sympathetic character, as one who inspires courage and is a true example in a life of pain. He would share his hard experiences with me and ask to unravel mutual problems which could not be unravelled by oneself.

Expressed to such a person would be those thoughts and the desired steps in life never described to anyone else and which had only been recorded in the pages of my diary. He would understand the true significance and the essence of the matter. He would give comfort and assurance that the difficult times would pass and truly happy moments would come.

I became so engrossed in the vanished past that I was completely

unaware of how quickly several hours had gone by. The clock struck six. I felt as though I were in a dream rather than rousing from sleepless morning hours. I felt weary, tired out by having thought about so many experiences from the past, recalled once again with a great deal of love and longing.

These days I find myself always thinking, re-thinking many old thoughts in ways which demand new explanations and substantiations. Yet there is no one with whom to talk things over and share what is pressing on me more than anything else, no one in whom to place trust, no one with true human seriousness and devoid of falseness and ridicule.

Yes, there are those who seek to be associated with such a person, but everyone who searches fails to find.

For a long, long time I do not leave today's dominating thoughts. I look deeply into all the related questions, consider everything in detail. But many questions remain impenetrable, covered by a fleeting smile. Not everything can be answered clearly. Other thoughts, impossible to forget, persist.

Human life is filled with so many secrets. Some answers are forever concealed, no matter how much we demand explanations. Some are uttered and confirmed. Some are read in another person's eyes and attitude and more or less serve to characterize him. Most of the time, however, they are not recognized and remain hidden.

The night hours went by in this manner and morning arrived. A

few streaks of light stole into the room to announce that day was approaching. The sky was still covered with clouds. The air was saturated with thick fog. A slight breeze made itself felt.

Little by little the people arose from their beds and began to busy themselves, some in the kitchen, some at other work. In our house, too, everyone was already up. The men went off to prayers. We girls--Khyene Kahan and I--put the house in order.

It is twelve o'clock and the day will soon be over. A light snow

is falling. It is quiet outdoors and one doesn't feel like going anywhere.

One works during the daytime, then night arrives. Such is the description of present-day "life" in the Ghetto!

Thursday, 25th December 1941

Yes! I am getting an answer to some questions which previously remained outside my grasp, which stood off at a distance and led onto the road of incomprehensibility. Now that I am a bit older my attention has recently been turned to quite a different focus, the attempt to precisely characterize and appreciate my own parents. Every single person with any insight at all strives to uncover the hidden secrets of human character and to know better what a person's tendencies are. In this way, I have gotten to know my parents and to prize them very highly.

Our father is a person of kind, compassionate nature, a person who in bad times would share his bite of food with a sufferer. Nothing is too difficult for him. He puts forth every possible effort, often jeopardizing his life, and does everything with a clear, honest conscience, endeavoring not to cheat the next person, so G-d helps him and leads him on a proper path.

At a time like this, when the trials of life are so very great, when the economic situation is so depressed that thereis nothing to be had in town, he went out into the country. At nightfall he stumbled wearily into the house with two pood [Russian measure, equal to about forty pounds] on his back. On the way he had tumbled into water waist high. I could not bear to see my father

suffer so. Everything for his children; nothing for himself. I was sorry I had not gone out to meet him and help him, but by then it was too late.

Now I can understand very well why he sometimes becomes upset. Constant hardship brings that on, for all of life is passing by in suffering and fear. Father should therefore not be annoyed. He should be cherished and obeyed no matter what he asks. For there are no better friends. They, the parents, lay down their lives for their children and deserve to be honored. My ideas are changing. With a second look, I am evaluating my parents differently and my concepts about their worthiness as well.

Thursday, 1st January 1942

This is a very frosty morning. It is cold and there is a strong wind. The sky is cloudy and melancholy. Softly the little birds sing their incomprehensible melodies. Still softer is the echo of their tones. Outdoors all is calm and quiet. No one feels like going out. Everyone's thoughts are saturated with the awareness of great hardship.

The weeks of Ghetto existence hurry by. Perhaps the time is approaching when the situation of the Jews will improve, when the sealed Ghetto will be liberated and the gates unlocked so that all the pregnant suffering of a very great number of Jews will disappear far away at a rapid pace, making trouble unnoticeable.

May the good tidings, true joy and salvation soon arrive. May the yoke of these many heavy thoughts about our present life

be lifted off, and may the mind be relieved. May the free air be easy to breathe and may eyes be opened wide to see the improvement. May the constant wetness of the pervasive tears be wiped away. And may the bright sun begin to shine and truly gladden our hearts.

Yes, the year 1941 has gone by. Everyone mentions it with much hatred. It was a year which brought cruel trouble and much extreme misery.

For me, the first half of the year differed fundamentally from the second. I enjoyed work and study, and the company of good friends and acquaintances. Our minds were free of any thought that so barbaric a man could arise as to be able to cut down the lives of a great many people. In the place of such thoughts were notions of youthful joy, of spreading one's wings and absorbing scientific knowledge, humanness, compassion.

However, the situation changed unexpectedly. Those days of uplift soon passed and that dark morning arrived when in a single moment everything was ruined completely, when the bloody battle between two opposing nations began. At the same time, a separate wide swath of Jewish blood began to spread along the horizons. Many innocents fell victim. Much sorrow has been poured upon the spirits of the small number of still surviving Jews. To them, all roads are blocked by thick walls of hatred and enmity.

The forty-first year of the century brought much joy, and constructiveness and cause for pride, but the troubles it brought outweighed them by far. May that year depart far into the dis-

tance without leaving a single memory of itself behind. Unfortunately, it is a year which will not let itself be forgotten, for everyone will recall that in that accursed year one's best friends fell.

May all the troubles disappear with the passing of the year, and the new year bring peace to the world, and joy.

Monday, 5th January 1942

Various thoughts drag by slowly and linger for consideration. They do not subside until the problem has been completely delineated and unravelled.

It is difficult to find a suitable answer for everything. It is even more difficult to conceal the sadness constantly dominating my spirits.

A surge of hatred for the present aspect of my young life is my constant companion. My glance turns with dislike and despair upon these dark days, these times which promise terrible, indescribable experiences and continuous bad news to burden us like heavy rocks as we watch people go hungry and naked. A bite of bread is always a chance gift. The little children tug at their mothers' hands:

"I'm hungry, mama...." The mother has nothing to give to keep the life in her child. She must watch with her own eyes as the youngster slowly deteriorates. She can do nothing to help. She calls out, she asks for help. Help comes from sympathetic, suffering hearts but its weight in life-sustaining value is

light. Whenever a young soul can be rescued from extinction and destruction there is a feeling of great pride.

Sometimes the thought that my life ought to come to an end quickly is dominant. It is enough! I have lived eighteen years, come through a variety of times and now, in addition, this dreadful period of being shut up in the Ghetto.

It is indeed sad to realize that now, during my young years, when the future holds so much promise of joy, everything must be ruined. My youthful feelings are disappearing and I imagine they will never return to exert their former influence.

These eighteen years, the most beautiful and the happiest in the life of a person, these years of growth, upward reach and development, of happy impressions, song and enjoyment, have now given way to their opposite. They are filled with impressions of age, sorrow and trouble.

The question might be asked: What is the use of such a deteriorated sort of life if it brings no good to people? But I cannot help believing, sometimes, that the bad times will soon pass, the sad feelings disappear and moments will arrive such as to start our young lives streaming anew, so that joy will always reign on all our paths. We will truly feel young once more, we will think of life as being beautiful and of living as being good. Yes, at this time our way is difficult and painful, replete with tragedy, but after this will come the good and the improvement. My wish would be:

May it not be just a fantasy; may it, rather, come to pass that things will be good again, just as good as the troubles have been dreadful. I hope such a time will arrive.

Thursday, 8th January 1942

The morning is cold and frosty. The sun rises with a bright, rosy, violet light. The air is a-shiver with the cold. Clumps of snow tumble from the fences. The sorry-looking skeletons of the acacias in the far field hang their dry branches helplessly.

The town is in the grip of the cold. It is dead quiet. Daily life is wearisome. Hopelessly embittered, everyone is bored.

The environment is empty and lifeless. It is unpleasant to encounter anyone, today especially. It is a fast day. Everyone is fasting. The situation is very strained. An improvement in our present life is awaited.

Thus this day drags on slowly.

We are so filled with pain as we contemplate the conditions we are all in. The sky is melancholy today for the Jew who can see; the day seems dark and dreary. Occasionally, however, hope streams in to gladden the sighing Jewish breast.

Night has already fallen. I went into Masha's house and talked things over with her. We two always comfort each other. With her I can disclose what is troubling me most. She shares her experiences, and I tell her everything. We think of each other as good friends, true chums from long ago.

I love her very much and respect her, and feel that her opinion of me is no worse. Even in my dreams I imagine that any road I travel I am with you, my best friend. And sometimes it happens, when I do not see you for a day, that I am concerned and troubled by the question: Why do I not call on you? Why do I not know the events of your day?

Saturday, 10th January 1942

Quickly, at a fast tempo, the week passes. Every day of the week has the same pace. Nothing changes in any aspect. The content of present-day life is meager. One important question, concerning the current material situation, is uppermost in everyone's mind. Everyone has the same topic of conversation, the same concern: food. It is difficult to suffer hunger, sad when one's organism makes its demands and one has nothing with which to calm it and to sustain one's heart. It is hard to endure and to push away such disheartening, sad days. Sometimes every moment of the day drags on so long, is so tortured and filled with care, so saturated with sadness--another thought, another Oy! and a sigh, and another brief recollection of the past, another smile for those days. The step one takes on the cheerless street is fearful, unsure, preceded by definite consideration of whether or not to go out. The days of one's life that should be bright are gloomy indeed! A happy laugh would be so welcome! The blood in one's body turns cold whenever the incessant, dominant thought--that life is so uncertain--makes its appearance.

Morning arrives. It brings one and the same program. The windowpanes are covered with frost. We rise early, unmake our

pallets, and start peeling potatoes. That is followed by putting the house in order again. We think: This is how it must be. A little of this, a little of that, and the day is soon over. Occasionally, I spend some time in reading or writing and forget for a moment that we are in the Ghetto. Thus the day passes quickly, and night falls. Sometimes I go to bed late, at other times, early. For a long, long time I lie there thinking, deciding one way or another until I grow weary and fall asleep.

Sometimes I see in imagination those days this past summer when I went out to cut wheat and corn with a group of girls. The sun would send down its depressing hot rays. Rivers of sweat would run from us, the slaves of our enemies, but we still could be cheerful and sing songs.

Then there came the time we dug for potatoes. We have come through all sorts of things, always with the hope that the bad times would end and better times would arrive.

Half a year has gone by since I left Wolozin. I can hardly believe that I used to spend my hours after work very pleasantly.

Those months flew by very quickly.

Wednesday, 14th January 1942

The clock has struck four and I am already up. My heart is sad. Mother is not well. She is in bed. As soon as I arose I busied myself with the stove, starting a fire and cooking. I must admit that I do not like working in the kitchen. Still, it must be done. There is no one to take my place. The children annoy

me terribly and I simply can't endure it. They weary me and they are noisy.

What I would like would be for mother to be well again and relieve me of her work. I am not apt for it. I burn my hands to the point where I simply cannot move them. I cannot bear Itsinke, a very bad child. He is not at all well brought up and is just wild. Such children shorten everyone's years. He is always yelling, always crying. Everyone hates him, he is so ill-natured. There simply are no words to describe the unruliness of this five year old child.

The day runs along quickly and it seems to be a boring time for everyone. Serving food, reaching into the oven--that is all very familiar to me. These days that mother is confined to her bed and I must do the work remind me of my rest days when I was in Wolozin. On those days I would get up later and be more at ease because I did not have to hurry off to work. I would cook whatever G-d provided and would tidy up the house. The day would pass very quickly. Then I would go over to see the girls. Now, G-d knows whether they are even alive.

Darktimes have come and have put an end to good experiences. I cannot write any more on the subject. Tears flow like water when one begins to think about what we have come to.

Night has fallen fast. Father has just come from the country. Stiff with cold, he totters into the house. He has earned enough for the week's supply of food: bread and potatoes. G-d be

thanked.

My body aches badly today, but I am paying no attention to the pain in my sides.

I should go to bed earlier. It is already eight o'clock. Adieu!

Monday, 19th January 1942

Now the cold is dreadful, especially right in the morning. Later on in the day it subsides somewhat. The sky is clear, cloudless, blue. Everything around is covered with a thick mantle of snow and illuminated by the bright, frosty rays of the sun.

The woods stand bare, with branches drooping downward. Every so often a quiet song of birds is heard. There is no road through the woods and complete, melancholy silence reigns over all. Life today for us is comparable to that of nature during the winter season. Quietly, quickly, the days hurry on, bringing sadness to

everything. There is no indication of learning of any kind, of any aspiration towards anything. Everything has been interrupted, cut off. Plans once thought about are no more. The erstwhile youthful cheerfulness and song are missing. The pride of youth has gone from me. Gone are all my youthful feelings. I am so crestfallen. Once in a while I utter a snatch of song, but there are always echos of painful sadness in the melody, reminders that once these melodies were sung to other words. That is another thing that is different now.

One keeps everything secretly within himself, etched deeply into the mind. Sometimes it seems that joyful, happy moments will return, moments when I will read about these daily experiences recorded in this diary and will be unwilling to believe that there actually was a time when we were locked up in a Ghetto, when freedom was far away, when our thoughts were preoccupied with wondering whether the moment of liberation would ever occur. Yes! At such a time it will be beyond belief. However, the strong feelings associated with these experiences will remain and bear witness to all we have endured.

Right now, however, I face the practical reality of
difficult times.
No longer am I imagining or thinking that the kind of
day will come
When we will be able to throw off the chains of slavery,
The conspicuous yellow patches,
When the terrible hatred of us will be lifted,

And our enemies' idea that Jews are not human,
That Jews should be eradicated.
Oh, how terrible to experience it all!
Sometimes I think I would like to be
In far distant Siberia,
Where the cold is horrible.
Those sufferings would certainly be less severe.
But apparently things must be the way they are
And not otherwise.
My desire is to see the world, people,
To get to know nature better, its structure, its secrets
hidden from me;
Tobe lost in hill and vale, to roam through cities and
villages,
To study the character of everything,
To see what form life takes in another part of the world,
To enter into discussion with scientists
And learn goodness from them,
To help suffering human beings,
To comfort them and to lead the stumbling
onto the good road.

But that is all fantasy. It is extremely difficult to achieve in reality. And there is certainly no point in thinking of any such thing now. Yet, one is only human, and so long as one is alive one occasionally fantasizes about the things one might some day be able to achieve. For the time being, however, it all remains suspended in air, out of reach...

Sunday, 25th January 1942

300 Men Seized in Our Ghetto for Labor Today

Man, that is to say, the Jew, can never know what tomorrow may bring him. Nowadays he lives only in the present day, worries only about the hour he is alive, doesn't think about his future at all. The very thought of it is foreign to him. Ever right before his eyes are the terrible experiences. He is always depressed. If sometimes a young child sings something happy it seems from a little distance that he is sobbing and lamenting; if he ever laughs, there are tears in his eyes. If he tries to be merry for a while a bitter sigh rises from deep within his heart, and everything is always accompanied by the cry:

"O, woe!"

Sad days have materialized. It is difficult to describe in detail the day to dayc events we are experiencing in the Ghetto.

Yesterday, Sabbath, all my girl friends and men friends gathered in our house for the last time. Together, we talked our troubles away to some extent and forgot for a short few hours that we were in a locked, dismal Ghetto, a fact which otherwise never leaves our minds....c

Separately, Zalmen Zawielewicz was here, and Velvl, who comes from Shtayfts. With him I touched upon various questions of the past, upon youthful days spent pleasantly, and upon the most important question for youth: "Love." At that point he sighed heavily. He mentioned the person he had loved deeply. Now nothing remains but slow, distressing, stifling pain revealed to

no one. I sympathized with him sincerely, tried to comfort him. I told him the time will come when they will be together again and will love each other and live together in happiness. He promised to come again tonight to discuss the question further.

However, before that could happen another decree arrived. In the still of the Sabbath night, when everyone was asleep, when the bitter frost was growing worse with the approach of dawn, when the sky was thick with clouds, when all around was hushed, the footsteps portending approaching distress were heard. The clock struck four. There was a loud knocking at the door while the following words resounded:

"No one is to leave the house. Anyone who goes out will not return."

Slowly, the voice died down,was still, and all was quiet once again.

All of us immediately lost all hope that we would continue to live, although we had no idea what the words were intended to mean or what result to expect as a consequence of them.

As we dressed, our heads were splitting, for we did not know what to think. For a long, long time we went around saddened and depressed. Jews, God be thanked, are prepared for anything. No one can think of a way to improve our situation. Even the Almighty Himself has forgotten about His sheep, forgotten about the small number of His Jews that are left.

And morning came. It was dreadfully cold, bitterly so. The wind was even worse. Everyone's heart is a-tremble as the announcement of "good" news is heard: At two o'clock yesterday an order had come to round up three hundred men and send them off to somewhere very far away.

Now there is wailing in everyone's house . People begin to pack some knapsacks, getting them ready for the men. There is a dreadful din out in the street. Everyone is shouting and crying and asking why it is always the poor, oppressed working man who must be the victim. "They" always do as they please with him; the rich, the wealthy, they do not go. They sit in their houses. Even at a time like this everyone is not equal. He who enjoyed a good life before still does. He does not go to work, nor does he suffer from hunger. Only the poor worker is always brought low.

Someone is pleading for mercy: Her lord and master is being taken away and she is being left alone with five hungry, naked little children. In the distance an elderly, frail Jewish man stands begging in a tearful voice that at least one of his children be left with him, that not all of them be taken away. Everyone is crying out, everyone's heart aches for his own.

Sad is the moment of parting with one's own blood without knowing where and for what reason they are being taken away.

For a long, long time crowds of people can be seen. Everyone's blood is racing. The same thought passes through everyone's

mind: Who knows whether we shall ever see each other again? Now the police have arrived. Everyone is driven from the market-place. The command is given to round up the men at once.

The knapsacks are put on and the heartrending cries of parting are heard. My mother faints as she takes leave of her son. He is an unexpected victim. She has expended so much effort in bringing him up. Now she must separate from him, say farewell. Then comes the horrible thought: "Perhaps, for ever." She screams and cries. Why are they taking away her son? Another child, a daughter, is missing, too. Who can tell where she might be? My brother cries hard as he says goodby to me and adds:

"Who knows whether we shall ever see each other again." Now he goes from the house and there is even more crying than before.

Also leaving from our house is Teval Karon [Kahan?]. The same tragic scene, with the same content, takes place. Aunt Sorke's two children also must go. They come to part with us for the last time. From every side the poor Jews come walking, carrying their knapsacks. Some are more warmly dressed than others. Some are virtually naked, and they are hungry. The police accompany the line from the assembly point with a few good whacks with their nightsticks. From afar, beside their homes, the unfortunate, sorrowing women who have remained behind stand weeping, casting their final glances at their husbands and their children. But we are dispersed. We are not even permitted to fill our eyes with them. From the distance we can hear that a sick Jew has fainted after being severely beaten. Instead of attempting to

revive him, the captors finish things off with a few more, even harder, blows.

Now a mother brings a warm scarf for her child. From behind, a policeman comes up and harries her unmercifully.

Everyone has now gathered. The marketplace is black with our young trees. The very air weeps over the ruination of the Jews. The street weeps. Everything is weeping, but no one has any mercy for us.

There, to one side, stand the sated peasants in their long fur overcoats and good wool leggings. They are glad Jewish blood is flowing in the streets, that Jewish hearts are weeping.

It is now ten o'clock. Everyone is now ready for the departure. Rollcall is next. It takes a long time for all the names to be read out. Then comes the commandant's order to proceed.

As my mother watched she realized that my brother's name was not called. She told him to step out of the line. With great difficulty he succeeded in so doing and remained at home. The other men are now all leaving the town behind. They turn to look back at it. The thoughts of everyone--those who left and those who stayed--are on what awaits him in the coming days.

The departing mass of Jews can no longer be seen. They are now on their way. The wind sings them a cold melody by way of accompaniment. The frost bites their cheeks. The road is no longer deserted. The men pass the woods and the fields. Everything else

remains in its place; only these men leave everything behind them and move on.

In the marketplace here, the wives and mothers stand about, bemoaning the terrible situation. We all stand there for a long time, even though we are chilled by the terrible, biting cold. We want to show them we share their feelings. We are left without our good friends. They did not leave us of their own free will....

I return home. I cannot lift my hands to do anything. I try to find comfort in the thought that we shall soon see each other again and converse as we did before...

Monday, 26th January 1942

The cold is dreadful today. So far, this is the coldest day this winter. In addition, there is a strong wind blowing. It goes right through everyone, not only those who are outdoors but also those who are inside.

The sky is cloudy and dark. Whatever light there is is so painful to the eye that one cannot bear to look at it. The storm wind is churning heaven and earth. The street is empty. No one goes out. Everyone stays at home.

All of us awoke early today. Thoughts about troubles such as ours give one no rest and wake one early to further thought. This is the first day without our closest relatives; the absence of the departed is felt in every corner. No matter what house one enters one hears the weeping of the women and the lonely children who

were left behind and who keep crying:

"Father, dear, where are you? Why have you left us? We are forlorn as stones, hungry, cold and naked."

Yes, we have been left alone, and you have gone away on a distant, lonely, dark journey.

You passed by woods, by quiet villages where peasants live happily, sure of their next morning of life. You noticed how different the life of the Christians is from the lowly life of the Jews. A transitory feeling of resentment came: Why do they deserve so good a life while we must always have a difficult time, be driven from one town to the next, from one road onto another? Each trouble is greater than the one before. Every time we hope for improvement, hope to be relieved of so much hardship, the opposite occurs and the problems are intensified. Such is our salvation, our liberation. I doubt whether there really is a G-d if He can be witness to such trouble and assent toit and remain silent, if He can watch oceans of Jewish blood being spilled, can see little children entirely free of sin being thrown alive into pits. Does not that constitute a sacrifice for whatever sins were committed?

Yes, everything ascends to the heavens: all the pleading, all the prayers, all the weeping. But G-d does not accept any of them. The great number of the fallen is still apparently too small, the cup of Jewish trouble is apparently still not filled. Our suffering is still, apparently, insufficient. The walls of the <u>bet midrash</u>, where dozens of people who were sent out of their towns

and villages have found refuge, weep and sigh. Hunger is insistent, and there is only one answer to all this for everyone: Either free us of such trouble or else, once and for all, put an end to the entire world. Send the flood, as of old, and if the people are indeed sinful, let them all drown in the cruel, raging waves of the deluge.

So, may all the world be damned. May nature, too, cease to exist. May the rays of the sun be extinguished. It shines for a few and brings them joy, while to others it brings a dark veil of sadness. May the happiness of life and its joy be cut down with everything else. No more joy! If it is only for a few, let there not be any for anyone. If all roads are barred to us, if the green paths to life have withered, if the passing rivulet of life is unapproachable for us, if we are humans only in order to suffer, if everything is bleak for us, if we are the slaves of every mean creature, what does life hold for us? This is a time when people understand what it means to live and what is life-giving. And if all these questions cannot be answered there is no need to stay alive. Everything should, in that case, be ruined, annihilated.

The brutal consciousness--and the reality--of conflict and warfare among civilized, cultural peoples must end and be rooted out. The animalistic, wild need to destroy people must be sunk into the depths. At a time like this, why are we being taught that the world has real meaning, having been established, as some say, on a foundation of learning-consciousness and prin-

ciples of compassion and morality? Why, in practice, are things entirely different, not at all like that and, actually, one hundred percent contradictory? Why is falseness so prevalent and why is there so much self-deception?

Haven't all paths to a good existence, as evoked by slogans about Humanity, Unity, Fraternity and Love died, in actuality, and been replaced by their opposites? In place of brotherhood we see devisiveness, alienation, separation. Instead of unity and love, which people are supposed to express towards each other, we see brutality, barbarism, crudeness. The true, right, established way has changed in every respect.

> If such repulsive behavior is encompassing the entire world environment, if only the few enjoy the full cup of happiness while thegreater number,ninety-nine percent, suffer, this can no longer continue. How could One who is merciful towards all living things be witness to all this and remain silent? I am the first to disapprove and to say that there is no Heavenly One.

Yes, it may well be that right now my pen is not referring to Thee in the proper fashion, but my patience has exploded and today I must write the truth about my dominant thoughts. It is probable that six years ago I would not have said this nor written in this manner but now, as I observe the suffering of the Jewish people, see the nation drowning in a cruel sea of trouble without anyone coming to the rescue, but just the opposite taking place: The oppressors are being helped to make them touch bottom--I am impelled to write. I see no help underway; there is silence everywhere. All else lives; we alone are in travail.

Should Salvation really come and unburden us of this immense, heavy load of trouble and say:

"Breathe in the free air, open your eyes and see that I am your one G-d, your Father, your Redeemer, that there truly is no other, that I alone am the One who remembered the persecuted, small, scattered remnant of the Jews so repulsed by everyone. Therefore, do penance now, and stride with confident tread on every road, soak up the true joy of living after all you have suffered and all your confinement and crowdedness, become free, divest yourselves of all care"--at such a time many people, not I alone, will reverse their way of thinking and become pious and good again. At such a time everything will change. In the meantime, however, all is as it is. For the time being, hope is far afield. All one sees before one is troubles, sadness, and nothing more.

Nowadays, the state of my thinking lies concealed in paradoxical feelings such as these....

Thursday, 29th January 1942

Today Worked at Clearing Roads of Snow

Ever and always, man is hopeful. Sometimes when he is in a bad situation, good fortune does appear. The thought which prompts the comforting state of mind brings with it encouragement and pride in its pervasive positive content and one thinks that the burdensome hardships will truly disappear and a state of happiness will truly arrive. One will quickly forgive everything, forget everything that pertains to the sad past, during which he imagined that any happy thing he saw was something sad, when he did not comprehend that people could be filled with happy moods.

There are, in fact, people who are always surrounded by a life of happiness. Because they never had any contact or any connection with suffering, sadness and hardship they are not aware that these things exist in the world. As a result, such people are unable to share the feelings of others very much.

But when a suffering person is on a road in the warm summer air and everything in the fields is filled with the fullness of living, sprouting and growing, and the rays of the sun smile to the bowing stalks of grain bending to their goal of multiplying their kernels, when in the eyes of passersby the many natural colors keep changing and the clear summer air floats about all the surrounding horizons, a thought from his usual state of mind flits by:

"Who benefits by all this? Whom does it rejoice? Is anyone enjoying the beautiful life of nature?"

Such a person sees everything in sombre colors. Everything is full of secrets kept from him. The nature of life is concealed and is not opened to his understanding. He observes all things with a non-human glance which speaks of his disillusionment in everything.

This same perception of life as filled full of suffering is our experience now. Every Jew regards our existence with a look of non-comprehension. A long period of hoping and self-comforting has passed. But the comforting was in vain. More days are approaching which will bring with them sorrow, sadness, curtailment of our young lives.

at the bridge, digging the deep ditch. At the time, we reassured each other, saying that the times would definitely soon change and we would not be required to work on the roads and shovel snow during the winter.

What happened, however, was exactly what we did not want to be tested by. This morning, when it was very cold and sharp, I was notified to report for work. I immediately took the mattock and was on my way. The accursed road is very long. All of us are there clearing it, although heaven and earth are in turmoil.

We work fast, hoping to finish quickly, for our hands are freezing. The cold penetrates everyone who is out in the open. Questioning thoughts flash by: Why are we so unhappy that no one is able to dispel our gloom? Why is everything kept hidden from us and locked away? Why do we see everything so pessimistically? There is no reply to give a precise explanation of our suffering.

Saturday, 31st January 1942

Along his life's road the youthful person always sees an assortment of pictures. He sees his future expectations in all sorts of colors that lead him to imagine they contain happiness and that the aspirations he entertains will actually be fulfilled. It seems to him that whatever he sees is genuine and will lead to the wished-for practical accomplishment. He sees the tie between the desired, defined thought and his future way of life.

I sit at home day after entire day and the thoughts about such questions simply give me no rest. All of these musings arouse

sadness within me, call up sighs and groans. All my youthful feelings have undergone a change and I keep thinking that this should be an important time in a person's life, when man comes into conflict with nature and as a result the character of the young person is formed. But for us everything has been ruined, divided, curtailed. One factor moves without the other. The days go by quietly, sadly, days filled with pain, the pain of thought. Amidst all the wealth the Gentiles have the benefit ofeverything,of their free existence. And far away, on the distant battlefield, the best people fall. They perish with the death of heroes and over their dead bodies the many-headed dull masses advance.

The heroes and thinkers who remain in the territory being fought over live with the single purpose of establishing a future of freedom for suffering humanity. With their blood they mean to fuse together the bricks of universal happiness, but in every storey erected by their hands triumphant swine take up residence and grunt at them with contempt.

The entire history of mankind is a story of fallen martyrs, both of thought and of deed, and every epoch culminates with the triumphing of the everyday commonplace. To some fortunate people, Jews excepted, everything belongs: wealth, new inventions, beautiful buildings, honor and luxury.

However, suffering, trouble, need and oppressive thoughts, hatred from others--these are the fate of our tortured people Israel. That is how it has been and always is.

"Always"--that is a terrible word; it holds within it the end, the death of everything and everyone.

Everything is without balance. Some people are free and happy and the beautiful future being painted for them is bright as the day beneath the vault of free sky. Such happiness exists for other people, goes hand in hand with them. For us, trouble and pain are always dominant. We have been robbed of everything and the only thing remaining to us is our frail hope; we are mute, friendless, with neither a today nor any tomorrow, with neither a home nor a country!

Sunday, 1st February 1942

The days hurry by, leaving behind them quietly troubling impressions, the same ones every day. Sometimes, however, painful news bursts in and simply bores holes into everyone's already pain-filled heart. This week, especially, such news has come and, although it is quite believable, no one is certain it is true. It is reported that during the past few days a massacre occurred in Rakow.

It is a sad moment when such news is heard. Nowadays, however, everyone listens to it without surprise. It is now the sort of thing we hear daily.

The situation of the Jews has already declined far enough. Bright day already seems quite dark to our eyes. Everything has disappeared from us and even the little hope that remains is wavering. Sometimes it drifts very far away, leaving only bare,

dry emotions suggesting neither comfort nor anticipation of improvement.

Everyone is completely weary of thinking that perhaps the bleak ghetto days will soon be over. All things have come to a halt. There remains only the abiding, proud, inner quality of endurance.

I have been sitting in the house this entire day, my mind buried in thousands of racing thoughts scattered upon all sorts of problems, but no clear solutions appeared, for first I would decide one way, then, inexplicably, another, quite opposite way. And as I sat thus, thinking for a long time, I was simply overcome by anxiety and intense revulsion for these present days of my youth. Feeling the need to change the direction of my thoughts I went out into the street to absorb some fresh air and a bit of energy.

The evening was dark and quiet and sad. The ground was covered with snow. Above the tops of the tall and silent trees large grey clouds moved along as though to reach a specific goal. Rows of twinkling stars appeared among them and looked quietly down upon the night-shrouded earth as though in anticipation of something. Inthe nocturnal stillness intrusive voices like the chattering of small animals could be heard.

For a long, long time I stood looking at the lovely evening illuminated and lent an air of majesty by the pale blue moon. The brightness of the approaching night was reflected in the pure, smiling, sparkling bits of snow. All around was enveloped in the

greyish nighttime quiet. From the distance came only a faint echo of the sound of the moving branches of the now dead trees. All was asleep and dreaming of the approaching morning.

I was truly reluctant to go back inside the house and have my earlier thoughts return. I wanted to remain standing where I was for a long time and to observe the calm, now quiescent life of nature. I wanted to transform myself into a completely lifeless being entirely unaware of anything, so that everything would be ended for me. All my young days would then have been in the past, all that I was to experience would have been experienced, all the joys of life would have been over and cut off as I was, all questions would have been answered, clearly and understandably; all my secret, never-uttered-to-anyone thoughts would have remained deep in my heart, gone with me forever. The will to live and the love of life seemed to me unessential, quite unimportant, sad and unreal. At that moment everything seemed to me unnecessary in the light of how nature was alive and filled with tenderness and love of people while we are rejected and cast by the world into a dark corner,are beset by troubles andsadness, - lifeless, hated by everyone, with everyone intent on seeing us annihilated as soon as possible. Of what use is life to us if all it holds for us are stages of eradication and destruction?

Yet one thinks: No! One must go on living, really to see true human happiness some day. Perhaps this thought is dictated to me as in a dream, insisting that anything could happen....

Monday, 3rd February 1942

At this time, when every minute brings a new thought, another mental image, when everything is so painful, so understandable and yet so unclear from a practical point of view, I am looking for some way to find a bit of comfort for myself. As it happens, I got hold of a book entitled The Breaking Point. It is by Artzybashev and is in two parts. The story does not express something pleasant; rather, it describes the course of human life and how it is always beset by burdensome experiences. Quite often there is the joy of natural pleasure, but the end result is sad and deadening. How often one misunderstands the promise of his chosen path, seeing it as truly good as he strides along at a fast pace in his youth! Another, observing from afar, sees it all as quite the opposite. To one it seemed to spell happiness, to the other, misfortune. The author analyzes incorrect attitudes with respect to actions during one's youthful days, when the person is attractive, energetic, apt to be talented, and bent on doing everything possible to enhance his own comfort and put the next person to shame.

The writer characterizes the behavior of a young artist, a painter, who is not on the right path. He loves first one, then another, then a third woman. He loves them all for the pleasure itbrings himand he gives no thought to his improper attitude towards women. Later on he rejects their love. The first girl, unfortunately enticed by him and cruelly led astray, has no home and now has lost her lover. She finds she must therefore forfeit her life and jumps into the river, ending her sordid existence

forever.

In the same manner, a second proud woman falls under the surge of his seductive, false protestations of love. The result is the same.

In this work the writer is expressing his view of love. He says that this springtime love is but for the moment, as when one wakes up on a sunny day and the dazzling sun streams in from everywhere the instant one opens his eyes. One feels like getting up and breaking into laughter, like running out without any destination and drowning in the joyful sea of golden sunrays among the green trees in the fresh air. Later on, however, life seems to be dragging along wearily on that hot, dusty day until

the sun, which has become so boring and tiring, sets.

Young love follows a similar course. If love could end at a moment of intense enthusiasm, so that one could dissolve in its shimmer and meld with the world like a cloud does into the sunny blue--that would be fine, but such things are not. What exists is but a brief moment for the pair of young lovers. The short-lived feelings, the initial passion, are followed by habitual repetition and a longing for the past. As a result, the one thing remaining is the crude, instinctive pleasure, which is not capable of filling out one's entire life, for the power of desire is limited. It is all a fixed circle which yields only the memory and the worry about having made the other person unhappy.

The author says a great deal about life, which is so replete with constant suffering. If one desires to put an end to the pain, one must do away with his life.

Artzybashev feels, in sum, that life is nothing, brings nothing, and that all pleasure is transitory. I have actually profited a great deal from his books, The Breaking Point and Sanine. To begin with, one should know how to conduct oneself. One should not depart from one's convictions about degrading oneself and diminishing the respectability of an honest girl. One should not permit one's heart to be touched by gentle words of love which may lead to mean results and debasement. One should not submit even to the prettiest words of promise, for things seldom end well under those circumstances.

Wednesday, 5th February 1942

Quite often it seems that the costantly dominant thoughts are disappearing forever and it is as though they had never existed and that there had never been any question about them. Yes, it very often seems that way, but in reality it is not so.

During this period, every moment since I was separated from my older sister, my thoughts of you, my friend, are not extinguished and you are always in close, familiar contact with me. Sometimes it happens that my thoughts are flooded with self-consolation: You will return and at that joyful time we will recall these bad experiences. In my eyes, my dear sister, your life always appears in lovely, enhancing colors. On quiet, lonely nights, when the brightness and light of day are swallowed up by slowly passing clouds, when the long, sleepless night is approaching, bringing with it immersion in my wide-ranging reflection on what has been, I am aware of the approach of this special frame of mind and I imagine your attractive, happy look. I talk with you and express all my hidden thoughts to you. With you, my friend, I find comfort. I feel that you are replying to all my confused questions.

Yes, for a long, long time I do not turn from this powerful thought. Right now my eyes are in an ocean of tears called forth by compasssion for you and the yearning to see you in reality.

The road between us is long, sister, and we are separated by walls of iron, by thick, dark woods and meandering narrow paths which pull us apart and thrust us into two separate regions and,

perhaps, different worlds....

My vision is too limited to catch sight of my sister, but our two hearts are closely bound, our blood always beats with the same pulse, our thoughts have identical content. At times, however, a doubt stealthily enters my mind: Are you still alive, at least? Are you somewhere in this bright world? Are you enjoying youthful happiness? Our lives here are now always filled with many painful ordeals, with uncertainty. Perhaps your life is changing: Perhaps you are somewhere where you can be free. Perhaps you are not locked up. And perhaps you are wondering whether we here are still alive.

Yes, it is a bright world, but it is dark for us. All our youthful thoughts are obscured by the sufferings of the community. We have nothing left. You, too, have disappeared. You have spread your young wings, lifted yourself up and gone far, far on some unseen road into unfamiliar cities and villages, across fields covered with snow. You went to search, and perhaps you found happiness. Or is there painful suffering and change in your way of life?

If only both our fortunes had been good, if we had met on the road that leads to freedom for mankind and had lived through everything together, if your happiness had been my happiness and your pain mine as well, and if eventually it happened that both of us were swallowed up by the swiftly moving fate of death, both of us together in that as well, and we knew our lives were ending forever...

Years will pass. In the minds of our parents there will settle the thought that somewhere their children are living in peace. However, the peace will be filled with eternity, with the losing, in the past, of two flourishing young trees. In the minds of the parents there will flash the picture of a high mound of earth beneath which, lonely in the empty field, the sprouting of these young lives was interrupted along with those of many other young people. Nothing remains but fragile memories of us, imagined fantasies and prolonged implacable expectation of the unexpected.

Years will pass. Everything will normalize, the world will follow its usual path and mode of existence, everything will begin to thrive again and the sun will shine, sending its bright beams. There will be true joy, but many people will be missing. They will no longer require anything. They will have experienced all their joys, and all their troubles will have ended precisely at the moment their lives did. Only illusory, lonely, quiet shadows will fall. In the bare field the wind will sing an accompaniment, a tragic melody expressing regret and appreciation for those young people who fell before their time.

But this is all merely a fantasy induced by the word "if". Something quite different could occur and we would meet on a bright morning; in that case all these imagined fantasies would be quite superfluous...

Thursday, 15th February 1942

It is several days now since I took pen in hand. The reason is

quite simple: On the days I wrote nothing the content of the days wasunchanged. Nothing of particular note occurred. The events of those days were no different from those already recorded. Everything proceeded in its usual fashion. I worked on the road, clearing snow, and the time passed. Still, if days or months go by and I continue to live and to record everything I will face the question: Why were there days passing in the Ghetto about which nothing has been recorded? And the answer will be that apparently there was nothing to record.

Early this morning the sun tossed us its cool,bright rays. The sky was clear and blue. It is so warm outdoors today one has no desire to remain indoors. And the times are now sopleasant and quiet one seeks only enjoyment and comfort...

In reality, no such thing even occurs to anyone. There isno desire whatever to go out. The comfort provided to others but denied to us is too painful.

Every moment is filled with one and the same question. Ever dominant are the sad thoughts about times past which will never return. Still, their having been and their sudden, swift disappearance are troubling. I think of the peaceful city where I spent such a long time and experienced a variety of youthful days, where I studied on quiet star-bright evenings filled with a happiness which was imbuing me with strength to help overcome worse times. Everything was familiar to me: all the roads leading out, the high hills of Wolozin, where, along with some of our workers, I would enjoy myself on skis after wintertime work; the

beautifully landscaped garden, with its fragrant summer blossoms, outside the window of my pretty little room. Everything was dear and precious to me and I would meet everything with a happy smile straight from my heart. Even if unpleasant or difficult experiences came along I accepted them all lovingly and survived them with the full faith that the worse moments would soon disappear and joy would pervade my spirits once again.

I was hoping that my work and studies this year would provide me with much learning and strength, with much growth in my young and still unestablished character, and would lead me on the road to achieving the goal I have striven towards since the days of my childhood. True, it was often overshadowed by thoughts of difficulties and obstacles, but this aroused the will to break through and not be ruined by the thorns obstructing the road. But now everything is left hanging in the air--all the aspirations and the will to study and truly develop a character that would be compassionate towards suffering humanity.

Where have all those strong, well-defined, achievement- directed thoughts disappeared to? Why are all the rich dreams of actually being able to live this fantasy gone from me? Did they perhaps attach themselves to other people who know nothing of such dreams and are pursuing emptiness, following the road of indifference and opposition to education? Yes, you have gone away and left me solitary, without hope of ever realizing you, without the expectation that you will ever return to her who loved you and always thought of you with affection. You have left me alone in

our deteriorated, tragic situation.

Yet, no! Even now you are ringing in my saddened mind, where nowadays there is such constant pessimism. It seems to me that my forlorn soul, sickened by my loneliness and my having been deserted, is living alone in this dark, forlorn world. I feel as though I were in a dense, gloom-filled forest all alone, without anyone, where I am watching nature thrive and the rays of the sun smile upon the vari-colored earth. Everything else lives; I alone am dead. Everything finds its way into the stream of life and attains its goal; I alone can not, I alone see nothing, desire nothing, exist only by the strength of the beautiful pine trees echoing with the lovely calls and songs of praise of the little birds which are witness to my solitary suffering.

Beneath me is the soft, spreading earth of the forest and behind me there are, occasionally, visiting wild animals. I have no thoughts about anything, for I sense how badly shattered my mind is, that it is unable now to function as it once did and to think about what has already undergone change and departed along a different, quiet road to elsewhere. Grieving and loneliness are always part of me. Plans formulated in times past are gone. Only their skeletons and some shadowy imitations of them are left to me; everything at all profound is concealed but remains forever troubling.

What will the immediate future bring? Will it be filled with ignorance and be contradictory to life? I falter under the wavering recollections, the hatred of myself, the hatred towards

the accursed twentieth century which brought to our youth complete and permanent breakdown of our development. And if I live I shall always hate it, although it will always be a subject for thought, a topic for discussion and reminiscence.

Wednesday, 19th February 1942

These days are so long and warm and, at the same time, so bleak and sad to our dimmed Jewish eyes. We see before us a road of troubles and finality; we see before us suffering and pain. We face death by hunger; no improvement is expected. It is obvious that we, the small handful of Jews, are continuing along a path that will lead to our sinking into a deep abyss of resignation and despair. We ask for help but no one pays heed to the supplication streaming from deep within our hearts. No one cares to better our hopeless state. We hear that very many innocent victims are dying, but no one is moved. All are silent, no one pays any attention to our sad situation. Everything goes on as usual. One thing alone changes: Our suffering increases, our lives grow ever cheaper and more degraded.

Where, indeed, is our Father, Who is not remembering His few, defenseless, tortured Jews as they sink and go under? Why dost Thou not send them Thy help, Thy mercy? Dost Thou not listen to the prayer of Thy children? True, we have sinned much against Thee. Many have rebelled against Thee. Yet, may not the many innocent humans who have already fallen be sacrifice enough for the sins we have committed?

There is no reponse. All remains in silence. One thing alone is

heard: our heartbreaking, solitary weeping. Our life is insecure; our brief existence hangs on a single hair. What is to be the end of our suffering? A single bullet can end a young life forever and put a stop to beautiful, aspiring thoughts. All can end before its time. Why do we deserve such a tragic end, and at the hands of these murderers who slake their thirst with blood from young Jewish victims?

There is no hope for improvement. Only worse and sadder news is in the offing, and it will fill our already pulverized hearts full of holes.

Tuesday, 24th [25th?] February 1942

Sad reports are reaching our ears now and it is very difficult for me to express their content. My tears are choking me and my heart weeps even more despondently while I must write about news of such finality: Within the next few days we shall be taken to another city, Iwieniec, to another sealed, dismal Ghetto guarded by high palings impossible to slip between. We face dark times of torture, of being famished for food,of sleepless nights and, finally, the expiration of our souls.

My hand trembles. There is a buzzing in everyone's ears. This vexing, terrible news, which cannot be compared to anything else for degree of trouble and suffering, has no justification. It would seem that things were bad enough for us. Now even worse moments are approaching, of leaving everything: our homes, the town of our birth, all that is so familiar and dear. We see before us nothing but the unfamiliar, see ourselves locked up,

in bitter straits, abandoned where the sky seems to touch down upon the earth, blocking out every bit of light and every least consolation, where all is ended for us. No longer shall we see our own table, our clean walls, our neatly made up beds, our yard which lies on the curve of a hill. All this will be deserted; it will remain in place, but we shall not be there. Where we are being sent, everything will be strange and sad, and it will seem that the noise of many people gathered together will be sounding in our heads. But no! A noticeable stillness will reign. Only one thing will be buzzing and murmuring: the weeping, the moaning, the pleas to G-d--Who is not listening to our appeal.

Everyone is very depressed today, taking leave of all the things upon which so much care and hard work were expended. Everyone seems to be taking a final look. Still, there is the wavering question: Yes, or no? It is impossible to believe, yet it is believed. People are packing. They are making preparations for the long, terrible journey.

It may be that we have only a few days left in which to remain in our homes. During the past few days there has been occasion for me to write of our freedom, which we did not appreciate, believing that the situation could not be any worse. And yet, we now suddenly find there can be quite unexpected changes. I have just come from working on the road, clearing it. I worked with pleasure, breathing in the free, clean air and thinking: Who knows whether we shall still have the opportunity to be at least as free as we are right now to work and not be hungry? We all are talking to each other with bitterness in our hearts, for we sense the approach of our degradation as we take our wanderstaves in hand to begin the struggle with a life of homelessness.

We have completed our work and are in a hurry to get home. It is a cold day; the sky is clouded over. Everything matches our thoughts and our sadness. Evening will soon be approaching. Everyone is uneasy. We walk homeward for a long, long time, looking at all the horizons surrounding us. We observe everything and imagine our sudden parting. I feel my blood congealing with the cold. We walk brisky and now, on the hill away off in the distance, our houses come into view. We are about to enter our Ghetto.

The street is quiet. Here and there a few saddened Jews stand watching the day come to an end. Evening has descended. The sun, scarcely noticeable through the swiftly passing clouds, took a long, long time to set. There is the promise of a bitter cold dawn. The rosy stripes of the final, disappearing reflection of the sinking sun are visible in the distance behind the little

wood already shrouded in night silence.

I really do not feel like entering the house, the mood there today is so sad and dejected. I feel especially crushed now, wearied by the work and the cold. Inside the house a little fire is burning. Everyone is discussing the news and each one is aware of a strange brokenness within himself. I go to bed with the thought that the morning will bring some better, less disquieting news, so we may forget, at least for a few days, about the exodus and be aware of something more positive. That is my final wish for this day....

Thursday, 26th February 1942

The night was filled with much anxiety concerning the matter at hand and dragged on till it seemed as long as the train of Jewish suffering. A variety of alternating troubling thoughts asserted first one thing, then another. I wanted at least a few hours of calm, but that is not what came. Every hour dragged on as though it were a year. I wanted each to hurry by and disappear so that the morning could arrive and bring a matter of a different sort. Finally, towards morning, I fell into a light sleep. My head had grown weary of so much suffering. A number of beautiful dreams appeared and gladdened my slumbering mind.

Those few hours passed imperceptibly and then I watched out the window as morning came up with a rosy-purple light. The image of the night moon faded slowly and now the sky is clear and clean and very blue. A light snow is falling.

I arose when the clock struck six. Everyone else was already up, hoping for better news.

I went out into the street, where people were already about. What joy came to my heart when I heard that we would be staying, that for the time being we were not to be sent out! Ah,how precious the moments in one's own home, where all is so familiar, intimate and dear! For a few moments I felt more confident of an improvement in our situation and I thought that, actually, our liberation could come quite unexpectedly. I took a good look at the freedom around me and at that moment everything was dear and precious to me. I forgot for a very few moments the degrading state we were in and saw everything in bright, beautiful hues. Then I asked myself why we are so unfortunate as to be denied enjoyment of ordinary human freedom. The answer is, I suppose, that it must be so and not otherwise.

Tuesday, 2nd March 1942

For Three Months Now We Have Been In The Ghetto

Unnoticed was the advent of the happy day of Purim which celebrates the joy that followed those dread days long ago whendark - clouds brought bad tidings of the planned eradication of the Jewish people forever. Those clouds moved at a rapid tempo and as they sped along were suddenly arrested and transformed. The heavy, dark sky cleared and light broke upon every horizon. Into the atmosphere of sorrow and declining respect for Jews there came a burst of bright sunlight.

The sunny rays spread until everything acquired a different

aspect. The now proud Jew was accompanied by song and dance. The foe of the Jews had fallen; his plans were in shreds. Every point in his program for carrying out a strictly enforced death sentence upon the entire Jewish population had been thrown into the fire. The evil plot was swallowed up by the flames, leaving unexecuted all the punishments that were to have been visited so wrathfully upon the Jews.

The suffering was transformed to a more favorable state of affairs. Life once more took hold of the human minds that had already begun to decay. Once again, probably, youthfulness returned to everyone, and there was joy and willingness to live now that the horror and the awful deeds no longer threatened. The dulled Jewish eyes opened wide and began to look with wonderment upon the beautiful and glistening eastern earth that was smiling upon them with its fertile promise. One could not help noticing the lovely, beckoning golden fruits of the orange trees, the salt ocean, the silhouette of the holy city of Jerusalem.

Everyone was indeed joyous, but not for long. The happiness of the Jewish people soon faded away and the situation changed once again.

Today we read the [Purim] Megilla at a time when our troubles are even worse and our lives more filled with pain and the account of our suffering even longer and more far-reaching. Nowadays, we hear the story and compare it with our present experiences, and everyone lets flow a river of tears as we contemplate yesterday and today, bitter, dark today. The difference is the freedom

that prevailed in our time, until last year.... Everyone desired--and enjoyed--more happiness. We set our sights wide, our thoughts were proud, the road to everything was free and open, all doors everywhere to knowledge and education were ajar. Everything was available; brightness was everywhere. Dark nights were illuminated by electric light. We worked and gave no thought to the possibility of seeing such dark times descend upon the Jewish people.

The course changed altogether and led to an abyss of lost lives. It changed the way of life of many people. Manythousands of victims went away forever into the dark earth and are forsaken in the bare fields. Many children have been orphaned. Many are crushed, hungry, naked, incarcerated, lost, freezing. The entire surroundings are suffused with tragedy, lamentation and groans. Our Jews are homeless, imprisoned, longing for freedom. But we feel even more threatened when our situation changes for the worse. It is all this we see before us. We see no improvement, and G-d only knows how it will all end. Our prospects have probably deteriorated. So my heart tells me. Purim today holds within it much sadness. We do not feel at all that it is the great holiday it is.

I met with my girls today, Esther, Reba Genzes and Masha. We discussed our downhearted attitude. At the same time, to bring encouragement into our worsening lives, we comforted each other with hopes for the arrival of better days....

Sunday, 8th March 1942

And now, yes, it is day again. It is bright again for the seeing of new troubles, new concerns. It is day again, sixteen or eighteen new hours for worrying and waiting for beneficent Night. I am devoting myself to writing and am thinking it is a comfort to me. If it were not for the writing I would not be able to endure such troubles. When I take my pen in hand it seems to me I feel glad and can write out my disturbing thoughts about our tormented, plagued people. Later, when I put the pen down, my gladness ebbs. During the daytime hours I am summoned to new suffering. Sometimes it seems to me that I am different from all other persons. Does not the beloved sun bring comfort and hope to us, unfortunates? Is it not pouring healing balsam into our wounds? Then why is it stabbing me alone as though with sharp spears and pouring poison into my wounds?

The actual answer is a sad one. These beautiful sun- filled days warm the thick ice to melting but bring no comfort whatever, no improvement to our sinking lives. Quite the opposite: Each day brings more wounds, more scrutiny into our broken hearts, more of being ripped apart, calling for help, calling for consolation. But all these methods for healing our health have failed. We have been robbed of everything and have but a single thing left: our precarious, dangling-on-a-single-hair existence, which is shortened by each bit of bad news we hear. In each such instance we take leave of life. Should it be called life? Can our young existence be characterized as living? "Life" and "living" are alien to us. They are always standing far, far off from us. Instead, sad feelings about the end draw ever closer. There is

no hope. And if at times there seems to be a little it is most misleading....

There is no way that leads to other thoughts, for everything has one and the same connotation.

Tuesday, 10th March 1942

I turn the pages recorded last year, read those impressions and think about their content and what sort of thoughts prevailed when they were written. I am shedding many tears now as I read of those free moments and occasional depressed youthful outlook. It is difficult for me to believe that I actually ever experienced it all: that I lived in a distant city, was in charge of my own life, came to my own conclusions about a variety of questions which interested me, that on occasion I responded with pride to those who expressed incorrect opinions concerning a particular subject or about a form of youthful behavior. I conducted myself honorably and avoided bad company.

My demeanor was always joyful, even when my heart was hungry, when sadness was deeply rooted there. I overcame everything and remained certain all would pass in time. And what was awaiting our community at the time?.... What good are those joyful moments of the past to me now, when everything is so tragic, so lifeless, when the days of our youth yield us nothing but sadness, when the bright sun is shining but brings us only darkness, when the days are so lovely but only for other, fortunate, people, not for us? There are no words to describe our abject lives. We are prematurely aged by dozens of years. In only one

respect do we feel somewhat freer: Our particular Ghetto is not fenced in and, G-d be thanked--we are not yet suffering from hunger. Father, may he be well, puts forth great effort for his children, suffers many a fright, makes his way down the road and carries the entire load on his own shoulders. And I am unable to help him. We are dejected and sit with folded hands, waiting. Why are we on so long a rest period? Our recess from work in the daily hubbub is very long!

I worry, but I cannot improve matters. It is not only a single individual that is suffering, but a whole community, and the troubles of the entire people transcend those of each separate person, so that despite the will to live it is difficult to push time along these days. The wait for betterment is long and each day brings with it additional partings with life in this oh, so bright, world....

Wednesday, 11th March 1942

This is a warm morning. It is almost time for Passover. The sun casts its gentle rays. The bright light is sharp to everyone's eyes. I awoke very early, because I go to bed in the evening. I did whatever needed to be done and now I want to finish the book, Der shvartser yungermantshik [The sinister young fellow], by Dinesohn. As usual, my heart is very sad, and I take the book in an effort to drive away my present thoughts. The author puts much tragedy into every line; every word he has written about the characters makes them attractive.

The book's content is pure and has much to teach those readers

who approach the work with a clean, honest attitude. It concerns a young man of about eighteen who parts with his good parents because they have become poor. He finds it very painful to witness their declining fortune and to stay with them and eat their bread without paying for it. He therefore leaves home and his good life there and sets out on a long journey. He eventually arrives at the home of some wealthy, very respectable, pious Jews in a small town, who like Yoysef very much and hire him to teach their children.

The people in the town hate the youngster; they fail to understand his goodness and gentility, his compassionate humane character. This troubles him very much but he thinks it will all pass, and that, in any case, a human being must endure all sorts of things. The daughter of the householder, Rosa, a very lovely and fine youngster, falls in love with Yoysef. The pangs of love cause her great suffering. Her sister's husband, Moyshe Shneyer, a very cruel man of brutal, wolf-like nature, does everything he can to drive away the educated Yoysef and keep him from becoming Rosa's future husband. The mother, Golda, loves Yoysef with a pure, maternal kind of love. Her son is Yoysef's pupil and loves him like a brother.

Several weeks go by. The love of the young couple grows stronger. They talk together and are happy. Yoysef writes to his mother about his experiences.

One fine morning a visitor appears in Shneyer's home. He is a relative of the family. He wants to take Yoysef to Petersburg

with him and teach him bookkeeping.

Yoysef has had a similar idea for some time and explains to Rosa that matters cannot go on as they have. He must find a vocation. He goes to Petersburg with the guest. The writer describes the parting and how the two young people pledged to be faithful and not to forget each other. Several months hurry by as Yoysef learns to do the work. He is an apt pupil. He cannot

understand why Rosa does not write. It is all the work of the black-hearted Shneyer, who had made sure they would not receive each other's letters. His intention is to keep Yoysef away from so much wealth and to keep Rosa in a state of unhappiness. His machinations reach a point where he succeeds in having Yoysef imprisoned as a result of the police finding counterfeit money in his possession.

Yoysef sits locked away behind iron bars, thinking constantlyof his beloved, true Rosa. But in Rosa's home they know nothing about this, think of him as the greatest of deceivers and that he alsoduped them. Suddenly they receive a letter,written in a hand exactly like Yoysef's. The letter informs them that Yoysef is, indeed, in prison and that there is a Christian woman who could rescue him from there, but only if he will become a convert. Rosa, therefore, should forget about him despite his great love for her. When they read the letter, all their hopes are dissipated. Rosa becomes ill. A match is arranged for her, but she shows no interest and remains melancholy. She has but one desire: to see Yoysef.

Nevertheless, the betrothal contract is written and the unfortunate marriage is to take place on the following day. Everyone is celebrating, except Rosa. Her sister, Rokhama, comforts her.

After a trial and the demonstration of Yoysef's innocence he is set free and departs immediately to see Rosa. He arrives on the day of her wedding.

The event is more than he can endure. He writes a letter of farewell, describing his sad experiences and ending with the statement that his life is over and that he will drown himself. He hurries off to the Fridman home with the letter in the hope of seeing Rosa there. In vain. Instead, he finds her sister Rokhama, hands her the letter and says:

"When you have read these lines you will know who the writer is." He runs off to the bridge to drown himself....

After reading the letter Rokhama hurries right out after him and finds that he has already been pulled from the water. She begs him not to make any further attempt to destroy himself but to remain promised to her. He agrees on condition that they wait six years so that he may have time to finish his education. He goes off to another city; Rokhama remains behind to wait for him.

Six years pass. Rosa, already a mother, still has not forgotten Yoysef. One fine morning he, now a physician, arrives and goes to the Fridman home. They recognize each other and rejoice in the return of their lost happiness.

Moyshe Shneyer will not rest. Once again he determines to destroy their joy. On the day Rokhama's engagement contract is to be celebrated Shneyer sets fire to the house. Yoysef runs to save Rosa's children and then Rokhama. He runs through the flames, unaware that his clothes are burning. A passerby who is carrying a pail of water sees him and pours the water over Yoysef, who nevertheless becomes ill and dies.

The writer makes the story end most tragically. As I read it I am shedding streams of tears, not because of the sad way the love story ends but because I am troubled by a question: Why must an honest, decent person who has conducted himself so faithfully and honorably in his steadfastness and love for this girl undergo so much suffering? Why is he punished so severely, when the punishment should actually have gone to the deceitful person who destroyed the happiness of not only the two individuals who suffered anguish because of his actions but, indeed, of an entire family?

The question remains unanswered and leaves me with aching and pain at the thought of all that occurs in a young life. Many happy hours spent together, much love and gratitude, but also many wounds and torments because of a predaceous person who betrays his own relatives with duplicity and enmity.

The reader who really enters into the story has before him a mirror reflecting life. He is led to conclude that all sorts of things can happen in a lifetime and can be instructive even though they do not occur in one's own life but in the lives of others.

Thursday, 12th March 1942

For several days now I have not been feeling well. I have been affected by the fact that some of my friends are ill, which oppresses me very much, so that I feel I am suffering along with them. One day this week I went in to see Masha and found her in pain and in poor condition. When I asked: "What is wrong with

you, my friend?" she replied in a broken voice that she was simply unable to be up and about. The words were like a blow to my head and I could say no more. Disheartened by the bad times and our personal suffering, we bared our hearts to each other. The content was depressing.

The two of us sat for a long time. It grew dark, the approach of night quickly swallowing up the light of day. I simply could not leave her. I wanted to continue talking with her for a long time! I wanted to comfort her, tell her that our sorrows would soon disappear and that our dormant youthful feelings would again be awakened and we would spend time together and share all our experiences, never concealing anything from each other. For the time being, however, our friendship is a comfort although it can bring no improvement whatever in our lives at present, but, rather, much sadder thoughts.

After we talked things over our hearts felt somewhat relieved. How I love to talk with you and share everything! Now that you are suffering I am suffering too, although not physically, as you are, my best friend. But I am hurting with sympathy for you and if I were able to help you I would be very happy. All else is alive and joyful while we are in such pain and experiencing so many difficulties. There is no more of the old, youthful laughter. So far as we are concerned it has been interrupted and has disappeared. When I see someone laughing nowadays I think he is crying and asking for help.

Considering how things used to be, I recall that even though

there were days when we thoroughly hated life, which even in those days brought little joy, still, the world was free then and our hopes for the future and that things would be better were strong. Our thoughts about life were uppermost and we did live to see some better days. But all that disappeared quickly and we are left more forlorn than stones in a field.

Monday, 16th March 1942

This is a very beautiful day. The sun is sending down its bright rays. The ice on the windows is slowly beginning to melt, but this morning it was very cold. Later on in the day the cold was less severe. The sky is clear and bright. One's eye perceives pure, lovely, natural colors. Ah! How beautiful and splendid life is in nature! How everything tantalizes me and calls me to living! But life is neither for me nor for my tortured people. The bright sun is smiling to us but I do not see any joy in its gentle, beckoning laughter. I am sitting here alone and lonely. Through the window I cast my glance wide over the surrounding area, upon the peaceful, white-clad fields and the silent, equally lonely woods, which are first to meet my glance. I see a few empty houses. They are not part of the Ghetto. Everything seems to me to be in a dreamy state of absolute quiet. Sometimes I think the environment sympathizes with our tormented Jewry. At other times it seems unconcerned, as when the bare branches of the now dead trees sway in the prevailing wind. I cannot tear my gloom-filled eyes from the broad horizon, where everything breathes free and full of anticipation of Spring's revival of nature, which is now at rest. The time of renewal is near.

Beauteous Spring is approaching with quick steps, bringing with it much encouragement of life.

Which brings me to the question: What will warm Spring bring for us? Will it be continued life? No one knows. The question remains unanswered, suspended in air. The days pass quickly, leaving behind them quiet, oppressive impressions. May the time of our liberation from all the troubles that beset us at every turn quickly draw near.

The entire day passes. Since there is no work to do in the house I read to drive away my overwhelming, wild thoughts. Today I finished the book called The Curse of Beauty. The author is Spektor. Quite an interesting novel. It left me with an affirmation of life. One's youthful feeling for life beckons; one yearns to bring to fruition in reality the aims thought about and set. It is my hope to live to see that happen....

Thursday, 19th March 1942

Today Finished Reading the Book, "Crime and Punishment" (Dostoyevsky)

It is difficult to believe the Passover season is near, for there is no change in the intensity of the cold. It continues as severe as it was in Shvat. The snow remains, showing no signs of melting. It still does not sense the coming of Spring, so beloved by everyone. The sun sits high in the blue of the sky. The lengthening of the days is becoming noticeable and the clear, merry brightness is especially evident, although it still brings with it a cold sun.

Every day brings more fresh pain and more to brood about. With the coming of morning tragic news also arrives, all of it about one and the same topic: the destruction of our lives.

It tears at the heart every time, and you think that everything will surely soon be over, that soon there will come an end to all the constant, distressing suffering. How beautiful life is when one does not feel under one's feet the shifting sands of annihilation, when you can step forward proudly and fearlessly and feel you can safely continue without someone raising a heavy rubber truncheon and beating you to death!

All such thoughts of freedom to act have disappeared, torn up by their roots from deep within my heart and the heart of my entire people. Sorrow, sadness, groans and tears--these are our companions and we are always occupied with them. Everyone feels quite debased, entirely without dignity. We are even weaker than the fly. No one shows us any mercy; everyone is digging still deeper in the effort to undermine the already insecure foundations of our Ghetto.

The sun shines in on us in our prison. It penetrates our iron gratings and beams down as if to say:

"Rejoice in the light I bring you. See: I do not avoid stealing in here in my effort to quiet your exasperated, aching hearts in this way! Delight in my splendor and brilliance! Hope that these my rays, thrown from afar, will bring you true joy!"

Our eyes see only darkness, mist, and dense dark fog, lonely and

darkness and bring some warmth again.

Soon it was past the time for everyone to assemble near the Jewish sentry-post. I thought in silence about the work and the road. We soon got underway snd proceeded slowly. Bashke Shmidt was with me. As we walked we discussed various questions. We passed by fields and left the thick woods behind. It is very cold today, there is a terrible wind and the hope is still strong within me that soon the sun will shine forth and warm us all. But it is a misleading hope: the cold increases. We walk forward and the wind pushes us back. Then the constant, oppressive thought recurs: We are slaves unto our enemies. On the Sabbath, on such an awful day, we are being driven a distance of six kilometers on foot to our place of work. Even so, we are glad and give thanks to G-d, praying that things not get any worse and that He will permit us to live through this time, just to remain alive and eventually experience better moments.

Thus, walking slowly, we drew close and finally arrived at the silo. All together there were fifty of us. We could see the mill, the running river, the buildings in the yard, and could observe the quiet, calm lives of the peasants. We were not permitted to rest long and were led at once to the place where we were to begin our labors. We saw before us a long field dotted with tall stumps.

The cold has increased, but we get to work. We stand in mud to get at the clumps we are to clear. It is very difficult work. The wetness fills our shoes immediately. Now a guard comes

along and drives us to work faster. We have no time at all to think about our fate and, actually, I have no desire to think about it, for that is useless. There is no shame in working. The person remains the same person. But the worrisome question persists: Why are we being tortured so much? It is as though we were not human beings, not of the same flesh, as though we were of stone and capable of enduring anything. We already are weary and the pain penetrates throughout our bodies. Now we hear a bell ring, announcing the midday meal. We gladly leave the muddy area and go on up a bit higher to where the ground is dry. Everyone eats a light bite. The sun slips through from behind the threatening clouds and brings warmth to our stiff bodies, but it is not long before it is swallowed up again by the clouds and leaves us to the cold and the dreadfully icy wind. We rest, but we are unhappy about the cold, which torments us.

And now two hours have passed and we again hear the bell sound, telling us we must return to work. It was pleasanter to hear about resting and it makes us sad at heart to have to return to the deep, muddy wetness. We work for a long time. I feel very tired because of the exertion and the cold. The hours seem to me to drag and I begin to doubt the time to go home will ever arrive. But, no, evening is coming on and we prepare to go home. The way home takes a long time. We walk with hurrying footsteps, hardly notice that we have traversed the woods and now we see Rubiezewicze in the distance. The cold has remained unchanged and I can scarcely wait for the moment when I am indoors once again and can warm my freezing blood. And now I am,

indeed, in the house and am resting at last. Night has already fallen.

After this day I feel an unaccustomed dislike for the outdoors. It looks ugly and terrible to me and it seems to me I never want to set foot there again. Usually, I love the sun, warmth, but now I am in a different mood. I do not remain seated long, for it seems to me I cannot move a muscle. I am stiff all over. I am unable to think about anything. Nothing concerns or worries me now. There is but one thing on my mind: getting warm. I go to bed and do not realize how quickly I fall asleep. My dreams are troubled....

Monday, 27th April 1942

The sun began casting its warm rays in the morning and is shining into the house brightly, bringing much joy to everyone (even to us who are suffering in our confinement) if only because we do not need warm stockings or much wood. Some people are able to appease their hunger by going out into the country--and they can go barefoot now that it is warm--where they do find something to eat.

In our house the material situation is not bad, thank G-d. We have bread and potatoes and something to go with the bread. I hope that G-d will continue to look upon us with favor. If there is food at a time such as this we should not complain. Right now the question of food is uppermost. Times like these do not require that we think about anything more exalted, about aims and achievements. Right now we live just for the day.

A day passes quickly and another day follows it. True, the aspect of some days is changed by the fact that bad news arrives. With the passing of the day the newly-arrived bad news also passes, but not without great concern and aching hearts. Sometimes I cannot believe that the cold winter days have been survived or even that they have gone by. Now I am turning some of the diary pages and I see their contents: how difficult the moments were that we have come through. I did not imagine that we would still be alive today and be here in this tortured, bright world, seeing everything and yet being capable of thinking and dreaming dreams. The bad news which arrived caused us nothing more than fear and our lives have been spared unto this day. I hope that G-d will continue to have mercy upon us.

We here in the Ghetto are especially worried now because, Heaven preserve us, there is typhus going around. It has engulfed all the inhabitants of several buildings. That is the latest news. This day is similar to the rest. It drags on. I did not go to work. Life goes on so slowly and so painfully, nevertheless with the hope: Let it continue as it is going and let the future bring much joy and light, causing us to forget this sad, despair-filled present.

These days most of us do not give much thought to where we stand. Everyone understands everything, but makes believe he does not. Someare able to bring forth gay laughter. Some young girls see things diffferently and manage to enjoy themselves and even carry on flirtations.

In the Ghetto life takes on various aspects. We do not always feel positively dejected. We are not always mournful and worried, with nothing but death in view. There are moments when we are filled with firm hope and the faith that the bad times will pass, when we are more confident and happier and feel youthful and strong. All sorts of things happen, but usually the sorrow, the fear and the suffering subside. More often, however, there are oppressive feelings, a yearning for freedom, a longing for the still-dreamed-of goal of studying and for being with people having human understanding. Many days pass during which we do not wish to notice the lovely, splendid brightness which cuts so sharply into our eyes, for we read in it the bleakness of our lives.

Many a fantasy-filled evening passes withurgent questions and complicated, unclear answers, and reminds me that at this time last year I was in school, doing my comprehensible assignments confidently and eagerly and with love. That would make me forget about everything, including the difficult feelings which sometimes came over me. What are my fantasies like now? How do these magnificent evenings pass nowadays? Not in studying and memorizing lesson assignments, not in thinking about the morrow, about getting up and going to the editorial office and meeting with all my friends and acquaintances. Nor do they pass with thinking about enjoying myself by going to the cinema or dancing. My weary mind is incapable of dwelling on such things. Those thoughts have passed with the times that belong to the past. Such thoughts still exist for fortunate, free people, but not

within us, who are deprived of everything. We forgot such notions long, long ago. Now there are others that are more urgent and excuse us from everything else. Now we think only of remaining alive, surviving. Our thoughts chase each other to pass as quickly as possible. When sometimes they halt over an old memory or desire, we push them on with nostalgia and a deep sigh, wondering how we can even consider any such thing, which today seems to us outworn, alien and distant. Why should we wake it from its long, lethargic sleep?

No answer comes. But I do believe one thing: Since the mind is always thinking in a variety of ways it can also turn to envisioning one's life as it could come to be. Life is so beautiful when one can see and experience everything, when one survives the worse times and better, happier ones take their place, when one maps a specific career for oneself that one wishes to attain. Yes, the beginning does go slowly and it is difficult to take the first step out into the world, but one is not intimidated by the thorns blocking one in the beginning and one strides on. It is difficult to find the road, to mount the first rungs to one's goal, not for oneself alone but also to help suffering humanity, to create a better future, to be among educated people and, along with them, accomplish a great deal.

I am not writing of all this as fantasy but with a strong, unbroken, undestroyed wish for--and much faith in--its coming into being. If I could have created the life and work I envisioned, I would not have had any thought of personal advancement or of emulating anyone and the result would certainly have been

favorable. Now I am writing this from the depths of my heart and my ironbound striving towards this goal. But when I return to my present wretched feelings about not being able to accomplish it, I am sad and my conscience troubles me greatly. My heart is filled full of holes, and in the quiet evenings my nostalgic thoughts of what might have been snare me and fill me with melancholy. I do not let them go and am enveloped in many tender, hopeful feelings about the actuality of the future before me....

Wednesday, 29th April 1942

It Snowed This Afternoon

Every blade of grass has a mother, every leaf is cradled in the airy arms of the wind, but no grass and no leaf is ever cuddled as long against warm mother's breasts as is the deep, shadow-filled green of the woods in that Eastern land, our land, where the hot sunbeams shine down. There people live free and, perhaps, happily, even now. There the wide, salt seas penetrate the fertile black fields; there the budding fruit glistens before one's eyes; there the lovely, golden sheaves change color as one looks at them and bring joy and happiness and nourishment and fill one with much pride of life. The hearts of thousands of those still alive in the prolonged, dark diaspora strain towards that land. The children who remain are longing for that earth. The tortured, plagued and scorned Jews strive towards the breast of that mother. We are parched with suffering, our eyes are drained of tears and we await amelioration of our plight.

This day has been cold and cloudy ever since morning. Similar

clouds and sadness are in our hearts. One would like to raise one's own spirits, to forget everything and not have anything pressing, to have no thoughts in one's mind. And now the atmosphere changes. It begins to snow and it seems that before long there will be white everywhere and winter will return with its cold and dampness. However, the snow soon stops and the remaining patches of white melt. The warmth returns and the sky is cleared of clouds. Melancholy evening comes, bringing with it quiet and loneliness. There is nothing to do, so one goes to bed.

Thursday, 30th April 1942

It is beginning to dawn. The dark night has only just ended. The period of pronounced quiet was of short duration. My moment of actual dreaming was brief. Now I am watching the night pass slowly and the morning begin to unfold. The sun is only barely visible, shining out as through a shadow. Long strips of cloud cover the sky, which, it seems, is sympathetic to us in our troubles and is therefore keeping its majestic, splendid light hidden.

What woke me so early was the voice of my father as he prepared to leave for the country. Worrisome thoughts about his safe return home kept me from falling asleep again. Some inner compulsion called to me, saying:

"Do not let father go to the country today." I told him of it and pleaded:

"Do not go today. It is very dangerous."

But he did not listen to me. He put his tools over his shoulder and left,saying that he was driven by need: There is no way to support life if one stays at home.

Today when father went away it grew even lonelier in the house than usual. He goes away every day but it does not affect us the way it does today. Our hearts seem to be telling us something: Something keeps asking:

"Why did we let him go?" Our sad feelings run to where you, father, are walking now, passing fields, woods and villages. You leave behind only your footprints as you plod forward with uncertain, furtive steps. You look into the distance and your eyes fall upon the wide-ranging roads which are deserted, untrodden by anyone, but you trudge on. The perpetually frightened heart within you pounds and you think:

This long wide road does not belong equally to everyone. One person traverses it confidently, without fear, looks about and sees how lovely the day is, how bright, how generously the sun shines from above, how green and full of life nature is. He proceeds slowly, sometimes takes time to look closely and even stop.

But you, dear father? How do you go? You walk along and suddenly it seems to you that someone is pursuing you on a bicycle and shouting:

"You there! Halt! I will shoot!" A strange fear takes hold of you and, suffering man, your legs buckle under you. You feel the

ground beneath you sink but you are still upright upon it and still whole and you think: Yes, my heart is still beating!

You turn to look behind you. Your thoughts are fragmented, downhearted, uncertain. But at that moment confidence takes hold of you and G-d gives you the strength to endure anything. You convince yourself that no one is chasing you and no one is shouting: Halt! It was only your own feeling of terror, your own vivid imagination that alarmed you, giving you this many-faceted, terrible fright and making your heart pound.

Now you are filled with hope and you begin to breathe the clean air more freely. You notice how your nerves, just disturbed by fear, grow calmer, and you attempt to concentrate and to focus your thoughts. You find yourself on the road, standing beside a tree and resting, gathering strength, my weary father, to go on. But you do not rest long. The time of day drives you. The sun tells you and you understand! You stand up wearily from your place of rest, take a last look behind you and then gaze far ahead, look in the direction you are walking. You see the sandy road before you. You see the woods you are now about to cross, the deserted path, the footbridge, the overgrown bushes, and you begin to think about how much drudgery and hardship there is in your life, how filled it is with constant suffering, what a lonely person you are. But no, dear friend, you are not underway alone. The thoughts of your entire family accompany you. You are going in the name of your children, you are toiling because of the need of your children whom you love, who are your blood and your comfort.

You are rich, father, and you are proud. And when the thought comes that perhaps you are suffering only temporarily, that no one can take your place or take over your burden at this juncture, a hope surfaces which calms you and says:

There will also come a time when all the miserable suffering of the community will pass, and the sunbeams will truly begin to shine for us. At that time, father, things will be better for you. Your children are rich in fine human gifts and strive to bring their high aims to fruition, which will bring happiness to parents wearied by life. Then you will say that, indeed, no good can come where no ill has been endured. There can not now be light where it has not been dark. For the time being, however, it is but a hope which raises our spirits so that we can bear the worst.

Once again your thinking changes. Your mind again advises you to be careful as you travel the road. And you listen: You turn down a side road which promises you safety. You keep going along with the sack on your back, and soon you reach your destination. Your heart is happier now and it seems to you that now you can see everything, whereas earlier you saw nothing. You see the beautiful, wide horizon, observe the calm and quiet life of the peasants, breathe in the clean, fresh country air, hear the early dawn songs of the little birds. It occurs to you that it is still quite early, that quite a long day still lies ahead. So, you call on one peasant acquaintance, a second, a third, a fourth, and you earn what G-d's grace allows.

And now it is past mid-day and you prepare to return home. You bend your back low beneath the hard-earned few pood of potatoes and start out happily for home. You hope not to encounter any of your enemies. The wind accompanies you with a soft melody. This time you meet several people driving by and in the distance you see another poor Jew with his little sack on his back. You meet each other and your spirits are uplifted. A conversation gets underway as you walk on. You discuss this and that and you scarcely realize that evening has fallen, the sun has really set, and you are approaching the city. You go through the park, you go past the soup kitchen [?] and now you have entered the Ghetto. Its quiet is noticeable at once. There is not a living soul in the street. You enter the courtyard hurriedly and now you stumble into the house. Your back is wet with sweat, you are out of breath and exhausted by the road and by all the accompanying fears.

And we all thank G-d you have returned home safely.

Friday, 1st May, 1942

Five Months Today that We Are in the Ghetto

This is a cold, rainy morning. The sky is covered with heavy clouds. The bright sun is not shining today, not warming us with its warm rays. A dense rain is falling now and a cold wind is blowing. This is reminiscent of a winter day. Everyone's heart is heavy and the hope is that this day will pass well, that at least no new false accusations will be invented. Everyone sits at home in fear and trembling. Several hours have now gone by and quiet still reigns. We hope that is how the entire day will

pass: quietly.

Times change, feelings and laws change, and leaders and regimes. Experiences differ to a great degree and, with respect to daily life, content changes. One day we are alive; the next, it seems that all is about to end, that life is to disappear forever. And thus one dies, with hope [still] pinned on the future. And it may be in this eternal hope for a better tomorrow, in this unreasonable faith in life, which sooner or later must show its true face, that the secret of the dreams of immortality in G-d the Almighty, who rewards us for everything, lies hidden. Truly, one must know that sooner or later one will have to die, so one must keep a tiny splinter of hope for the last minute, for the final day will arrive and there will be nothing left to hope for on this earth.

Or perhaps it is just the opposite: Only people who have nothing to do, such as the wealthy, the well-to-do and the powerful, think about the life of the soul in another world. It is, after all, a luxury to think about death and about the soul--a sort of temporizing. A poor person cannot indulge in such thinking at all. He accepts death, when it comes, as it is, as a necessity, just as he took life.

When all is said and done, what is death to those who believe that while they live they share the breath of thousands, of millions of other lives whose aims and purposes are the same: to undermine the rotted old world and strive to create a better, more beautiful world for all men? When I go under, am destroyed,

I still exist a thousand times over in these thousands and millions who carry forward my desire and my aim and continue my battle. The only ones afraid to die are those abject idlers who have nothing in their lives but themselves. A person who is devoted to an ideal, who has something important in his life, lives on, much more powerful because of the ideal in his life.

Saturday, 2nd May 1942 (Rubiezewicze)

The week passes quickly. The days go by with everything the same. More news, another report, and thus it is day after day. And what will G-d finally grant us in the way of improvement, of release from our situation? Sometimes it seems that although today passes with much worry and fright, tomorrow will bring something much better, the lovely sun will begin to shine bright and clear, the clouds of fear and suffering will disappear and then the gates of a new, changed life will open to us. No longer shall we be locked up or enslaved, nor will we be so depressed, so insecure and uncertain, thinking we are superfluous on earth, not needed in the world. This trouble-filled life will end and a new period of freedom--and remembrance of this time we have gone through--will begin.

It has been possible to discern much about the character of people one lives in the same house with, seeing life go on in a constant pattern of repeated suffering. Many have been thrown together who do not get along and are always wrangling. They are not suited to each other by nature and are out of harmony, each begrudging the other his still being alive. There is some evidence of this kind of quarrelsomeness among the inhabitants of

our Ghetto. It is very difficult to touch upon this subject. In this dark time of adversity, when such a great burden of trouble has been inflicted upon us--upon all the Jews--some people even increase their suffering by quarreling over a pot or a spoon. They forget the kind of times we are living in, and that any minute may bring serious worsening of our situation. They fail to understand that this is not the time to behave in this manner, that only behavior just the opposite of theirs will hasten deliverance. Called for are unity, dedication, compassion.

I sometimes step outdoors in the evening to stand beside the house. It is quiet everywhere except that shouts of arguing and all sorts of name-calling can be heard from nearby. It makes my heart ache and I cannot bear it. I imagine the inhumanity and commonness of such a life, wherein people are not accountable to themselves and do not choose their words, and I am forced to leave the courtyard and go back into the house.

The Sabbath day passes very slowly, in prolonged thought. I have no desire to go into anyone's house and discuss these questions anew. My heart is so sad... Outdoors it is raining, too, and cloudy. These elements combine to create a very gloomy mood that is difficult to brush off. It is difficult to forget what is happening in this time, difficult to think about amelioration and about quickly getting through the present crawling days and oncoming nights, for which one observes no indication of improvement, indeed, no change whatever.

Once again I turn the recorded pages of my diary for a long time

and try to forget today's depressed fate. I find myself with thoughts of the past, when I was a young child and knew about one thing only: how to study and understand and try to penetrate into whatever was being taught us. What beautiful days of youth those were! And I thought they would never end. Sometimes, also, I would have the thought that I should like to be older and have more understanding. I did not comprehend at the time how good it all was, how childlike, how foolish and good. I read about my various impressions as I walked to the meeting hall, to the Batya club. There was much singing and dancing, many a fine lecture and evening enjoyed in the company of girl friends, many a pleasant conversation with the leaders. I read this now and it seems to me like a dream: It never really happened. Everything is over, leaving only these brief accounts of impressions and recollections. I grow even sadder because not only have those moments gone, but many thousands of other experiences have been lived through that were far from childlike; they were completely the opposite: serious and painful. Tears come to my eyes at the remembrance and the passing. Left to me are the present events, so opposite in nature, full of fright, horror and sighs...

Tuesday, 5th May 1942 (Rubiezewicze)

Today is Lag b'Omer. It Snowed.

Right now the days are very cold. A frigid wind blows all day and the sky is always cloudy. The bright sunbeams do not appear. It is cold, dreary and dark. One feels even gloomier outdoors where everything is enveloped in a long silence; the only thing

to penetratethat silence is the melody of the prevailing cold wind.

Of course, the cold is not constant: We have a minute of summery May, and a minute of winter. Today, however, the cold is lasting longer. The sun shines out for a few minutes and it seems that now it is warm again, but that does not last. The sunshine is swallowed up by masses of oncoming clouds and it begins to snow. Everything is covered by a thick white puff. It keeps coming down for a long time and one begins to think there will soon be a sleigh run, that the winter days have returned. They were lonesome for us and now, in the just-arriving days of May, we have winter again . Two different forces with opposite characters: One comes bringing warm days, the other is destructive. The snowfall lasts all day, from early morning, and everyone sends it unhappy glances, for it is unwanted. Later on in the day, however, it ends and quiet returns. The wind stops whistling and little by little the unexpected May snow begins to melt. Once again we have mud and puddles.

Today is Lag b'Omer but it is not, I am sorry to say, as it used to be. Today no one is going into the woods and the history of the day is not being taught. It passes very quietly, simply and calmly, making no impression. Everything proceeds as usual.

I stand idly by the window. It is evening now and, as is my custom at dusk, I do nothing but consider, quietly, my favorite topic: the past and what shape it took and what path I planned for the future. Now I am examining every experience of that

period separately in my mind: I am remembering the time I spent in Wolozin, the quiet days of work there, the difficult conflicts within my own feelings, the sometimes trying experiences never disclosed to anyone but held, concealed, within me, the struggle with the kind of thoughts which burdened my weary heart. Despite everything I held my ground confidently, fought my troubles heroically and refused to capitulate to the unacceptable. Everything passes. I was always single-minded and got through everything thanks to my determined, iron character. I was certain it would be difficult to take the first steps in life and that therefore it was important to have the desire and the ability to study and understand what it means to live.

To live means to endure constant suffering; to live means

to feel; to carry on a constant struggle with one's own emotions, thoughts and experiences. Living teaches a person a great deal. It points the way to his future course. It teaches one to comprehend what is [written] between the lines of his life's journey. Life, in its great variety, presents us with portraits of others in whose lives we may see our own reflected. Those who have led a false, deceptive and misleading life of fraud, who have gone off to their eternal rest having done unsavory things to mankind serve as a warning to us. He who wishes to understand and has a desire to probe deeply will seek the good, honest way, will himself recognize the poor results of wrongs done, will reject them and choose to be guided by those precepts that are good. The wrongdoer is regarded with considerable scorn by the person who understands right and wrong and thinks about the reasons such a person permitted himself to be carried along by the wrong stream, leading him into inhumanity, blinding his eyes and preventing them from seeing the evil and vileness towards which his violent instinct is propelling him. He readily lets himself be dragged along and buffeted about by the current without lending the matter any thought, without any strife with his own desires, without any wish to turn back and reestablish himself on a firm foundation of truth and justice.

This weak individual, weak not in physical strength but in overcoming the evil within him, this person of flabby character permitshimselfto be led along any path and into any area into which the wind drives him, into the dense woods, the thorny branches, the swamp or the mire. A little bird, with its sweet

song, entices him farther and farther by the attractive force of her melody. He is taken in and then cannot see any way whatever, not even the narrowest path, by which to turn back. And the little bird pecks out his brains until he collapses on the battlefield of his own seductive thoughts. In his final moments he does cry out, but no one hears and the little bird goes on doing what she was doing. He attempts to get up and walk, but he falls down again and begins to think about how base and how deluded he is, all because his weak nature aimed low.

But now it is late: He cannot about-face and begin struggling anew, for his end is near, there among the tall old oak trees and the young birches in the depths of the buzzing forest, between the descending shadows and the magnificent sunshine breaking through into the wood. He recognizes his end, casts a last glance upon the lovely world, takes a deep breath of the fresh forest air, sees the blueness of the spring sky for the last time, wants to continue looking at it for a long time and attempts to fend off the footsteps of Death as it approaches. Death robs him of everything and he is left lying with open but dead eyes fixed upon still-vibrant nature. How terrible his life; how much more terrible his death! He ends his life solitary, with only his final struggle and his own contempt for the things he himself has done.

Such a case is awful, but occurs frequently. That is not how man, who is higher than the animals, should conduct himself. A person's way in life should neither be entered upon rashly nor considered lightly, and before one sets foot into the wide world

of life it is necessary to do a great deal of investigation and study. What will be the results of any step? Will they be good or bad? Are they likely to bring true peace, and not only for oneself? Will they also be a source of education to others about to take the first step into the beautiful world? It is necessary to inquire of people who have already lived through such a moment, to learn from those who have done the right thing, who have overcome what is bad and built a beautiful, safe road decorated with lovely flowers, a respected and admired road which at the start had many a sharp wild thorn, a road upon which, between one step and the next, there stood iron walls which energetic persons broke through, coming away with something good. I am especially opposed to individuals of vacillating, weak character who proceed uncertainly and cannot distinguish good from evil, who cannot swim upstream, who are perpetually in doubt. A person should possess the kind of character which can endure suffering and be able to accept things. A person should endeavor to learn from individuals on the right road. He should seek out such associations and friendships, ask questions and request that he be taught. A person should want to become educated, to develop a compassionate nature, to feel for those who suffer.

A person should not be intimidated by obstacles he may encounter on his way; he should break through them and not permit himself to be misled or deterred. This may be really difficult; I do not have the strength to break through these trying times. No! One must have the desire to overcome what is bad and one must act

and not be left like him who gave in to his own desires and allowed himself, for the sake of pleasure, to be misguided and seduced by the little bird. One must be self-assured and stride out undaunted into the world of life and not have any doubts once it has been established that the direction will really be a worthwhile one.

Wednesday, 6th May 1942

Two Men from Rubiezewicze Ghetto Shot Today!

From Derewno and Iwieniec: Milien Kasmajewicz--a Young Lad, and Yoysef Mordukhowicz

I am so weary of sad news. I feel that my heart is already beating less strongly, without its usual energy. I feel that my head, which seems to be clinging by only a hair to my neck, is so tired and burdened by the heavy yoke of trouble that it is drooping lower and lower. Every moment our imprisonment and the experiences of our tortured life put another laceration in our already bleeding hearts.

It was not long ago, hardly four days, that two girls, Khane Kiwawitz (from Khatewo [Ratowo?]) and Khaya Berman (from Derewno), set out to look for an honest bite of bread with which to sustain themselves and not go hungry. Out beyond the Ghetto they were caught by a policeman and led away to the gendarmes in Iwieniec. I am incapable of describing their experiences, [during which] they had no thought of remaining alive but wished only that death come as soon as possible to deliver them from their suffering. But G-d in his mercy brought them home two days after

they were caught, and the joy in the town was boundless.

This joy had barely restored our strength a little when news came ofa second, worse trouble, one with an irreversible ending. Two young lads, Milje Kostajewicz and Yoysef Mordukhowicz (both from Derewno) were charged with the forbidden, evil behavior of not completing their work, and with "injudicious conduct", and were also sent off to Iwieniec.

Their road to death was ugly. Much suffering, much agony, beatings. Not only did they undergo a trial but they were tortured with dreadful blows which made their blood flow and then, half dead from pain and the thrashings, with wounds in their heads and bodies, they were led to their death at six o'clock this morning. The final stratagem for their end was an order to dig a grave in five minutes for their own nearly dead, undeserving bodies. Sad wastheir going this lovely morning, when the fresh dew lifted itself high over the pretty, thriving grasses and the clear, bright morning began to shine forth as everyone rose from bed and went off to work. That was the time when for these two young saplings everything was extinguished. The sky became entirely overcast with long streaks of thick dark clouds at the very instant their final glances fell upon the bright but now suffering world, when they saw before their eyes the yawning black grave that was soon to be their eternity, their all; away forever, farewells said forever, leaving everything behind them in the full bloom of May.

Everything is still alive and still quivering, breathing the

fresh air of a majestic spring; everything continues, taking its usual course; only you have been cut down in the best years of your young development. The shot destroyed you, separated you from life, and now you already lie in your resting place, covered by a high mound of black earth, the two of you burned up and eradicated in a single minute. No trace of your lives remains. Two mighty oaks, two enormous sacrifices, two beautiful young lives taken at the beginning of day when morning was arriving for nature and for man. At this exceptional time, which demands that we divest ourselves of all humanity, the heart in everyone becomes ossified and one finds the strength to look on passively. This attitude of unfeelingness persists because in our common Ghetto no one knows his own end. Everyone understands that our life is suspended by a hair. We look at the lovely surroundings, at the vitality in nature, and find it difficult to believe that we still have some capabilities and can still see what is alive for others while, at the same time, everything is ended for us. It is only the one G-d who can have mercy upon us. He alone is left to us; there is no one else.

The sadness in the city is overwhelming. Each person is reduced still more as he hears how people are sinking into the ground, going under, while still others are permitted to drop and are even pushed to make it happen sooner. There is no explanation, there is no consolation whatever, merely a wavering hope which says: Death! Death! But occasionally there is a turn back and the feeble thought breaks through: Perhaps, Life! Perhaps!

Thursday, 7th May 1942

We people are so exhausted by trouble we are without feelings. No, we are not human beings; we are even less than four-footed animals. We have no human thoughts. Nothing good reaches us, only what is evil. And when one goes outdoors one sees nothing. One emerges as from a cage and everything is dark before one's eyes, the bright sun is so heavily veiled. Others catch sight of it and are delighted with its beauty, but it oppresses us, chokes us to the last breath, tortures us, tears at our living flesh, makes us ill after difficult experiences and fear, beatings and imprisonment.

Ah, spring! Life! How beautiful and how exalted they are as they hover in my weary imagination and what a happy ring the words have! But when we ponder them they arouse doubt and disgust for such thoughts as always lead to one end, to the road of withered, impenetrable thorns guarded by walls of iron.

Yes, we are living corpses, scarcely moving, bound corpses tossed into a snake pit from which we are unable to crawl. And more, there are those who tease and toy with our souls and don't take the serpents away. If they are torn away for a while we think it is all over, that we have been devoured, consumed like good wine by the awful, infuriated snakes, that, lashed tightly to our fate, we are gone forever and have been left to lie in our eternal rest.

Then we open our eyes and a thought suddenly comes: Am I dead? No, the soul remains, a soul which is alive and still imparts

some spirituality to life. Yet, I am in doubt: Is this reality? A response quietly forces its way through: It is true, but not entirely. We are half dead. If the human being is separated from the freedom which is his proper given right, if he has been treated like an animal, if he cannot conduct himself according to his own wishes, if he lives a life of constant opposition, if he is coerced into slavery worse than that of the primitive negroes, can that all be considered life? If so, then what constitutes death?

Is death that much easier because once it occurs one does not have to fight it any more? It has already overcome everyone and has achieved its ultimate aim. Our present life is many times more degraded than death. It demands that the living conduct a struggle, do brutal battle with our own human feelings. Although we hear the dictates of heart and mind we must suppress them. Instead, we must assume an unnatural course the moment we hear about the killing and the shooting. As the end slowly draws near one actually becomes stony-hearted, hardened and indifferent, as though it all had nothing to do with us. Can this be natural? No! It can be that way no longer. Perhaps it is a spiritual discipline inflicted upon us so that we might feel, comprehend and stand at the door of death yet remain quiet and acquiescent; so that we might call ourselves normal persons and not go insane with the suffering, the pain, the hunger and the fright; so that we might look at our death and see that it is real, that we are experiencing it and are incredulous at still being alive.

I feel I am probably abnormal, not a human being. If so, how is it that I am writing and why are my thoughts consistent with each other? If we are experiencing all this and I am giving a precise description of the form our life takes, what is the proper designation for me: normal, or abnormal?

Do I live, or am I already dead? Am I in a dark wood and dreaming about such things, or in a place laid waste, where there are only sky and hot sand? Or perhaps in some world of the dead, or among demons, perhaps? I would gladly give myself replies which correspond to the actual truth, but I feel that I do not, unfortunately, have the strength right now, with thoughts as powerful as these are, to characterize myself precisely and to reflect my innermost being on you, my clean, innocent paper, to harass you by pressing down upon you with my friendly pen and ink to portray myweary inner self with this wildness which has come over me and is attempting to devour me.

Leave me, you thoughts that I do not even want to consider! Go away and let me live in peace and quiet, free of torment. In myfinal moments let me depart quietly from this beautiful world. And do not deter me: let me follow my simple road to the end. Do not, my weary thoughts, demand explanation of your slave. Torture me no more. I wish to be left alone and quiet.

Why do you persist in delving deeper and deeper and give me no respite, and why, thoughts, do you refuse to have compassion for my heart, which no longer beats normally?

Perhaps I am writing all this in a fantastic, ephemeral dream on the day I feel I am about to drop and remain lying there, and I am groaning and weeping in my sleep and no one heeds me. Or perhaps I am writing during the beautiful, bright daytime, while I am still alive and aware of the pain and hearing the weeping. The sun is shining and it is fair and bright all around and we who are captive in chains are being summoned to life, to existence. Then how shall we put asunder the irons intertwined with barbed wire and go off together with you, Life, and with the sun? How shall we acquire the heroic physical strength to enable us to break all this, to destroy it?

These torturers plan to choke us and murder us. They want to be powerful, the conquerors of this ground and its faint and expiring Jew. They intend to represent themselves to the civilized world as brave and heroic, strong and mighty. We are feeble, weaker than weak, and must, perforce, lie still and not complain. We do not try our strength, for that would be in vain. We shall remain drained of vitality, shall faint and fall, this time not to arise, and we shall see nothing more.

Today I am writing this out of the actual uncharacteristic state of

disillusionment and hatred of the world, which continues silent and is not delivering us from the people who intend to do us harm.

But I am still alive and moving about. That impels me not to remain silent but to speak out, if not out loud to the world, for all to hear, then at least by writing this to calm myself and imagine that I feel relieved.

Suchare my mood and my opinion today: If it cannot be any other way, then let it be that which will exclude no one, but let it be a death that will come naturally, and not by a bullet from the hand of a man.

Friday, 8th May 1942 (Rubiezewicze)

At 12 O'clock Today 203 Working People Were Sent from the Artels to Iwieniec

Once again a sad event calls for my comment. Once again there is gloom and leave-taking, once again, weeping and groaning. This entire week has been crammed with painful events and experiences. It is a week impossible to forget, with one great trouble following another and the sorrowing exceeding that of the previous week... For now there is new weeping, the unsealing of a new stream of tears and louder cries, new sobbing, new suffering and hardship. I have no desire whatever to tell today's sad news right away. My hand is shaking and rivers of my tears are wetting you, my clean paper, tears of suffering, farewell and anguish, bitter tears brought on by edicts and persecution, tears for young lives cut down.

But no! I must write. I must have a way to share tears other than with people, tears through which I look at the beautiful bright world as through a magnifying glass and see the splendor of nature as the streams of sad wet tears flow. I did not know last night as I was getting into bed that a change as great as today's, which I am about to describe, would take place. I went to bed exhausted by a variety of reflections which truly rent and muddled my brain. I fell asleep. The night passed peacefully. There was intense darkness, the sky was cloudy, and the clouds eventually moved down upon our gloom-filled Ghetto, symbolically and actually, disrupting our Friday and our entire lives forever. I did not notice how rapidly the night darkness disappeared and how quickly morning arrived, as though hastening to bring us this terrible news of parting for many families.

As though to taunt us, the sun had begun to toss bright beams through the windows. Despite what awaited us, it did as it usually does, shining and warming. Yes, it was a splendid, beautiful morning with magnificent purple colors shining high in the sky as if to comfort us over the sad news we were soon to hear.

In the early morning I and all the others withme were calm, thinking that this day nothing would happen, that today we would have surcease from our sad thoughts. I peeled a good many potatoes and put them up to boil, tidied up the house and the yard and preparedfor the Sabbath, and everyone else in thehouse did whatever work he was supposed to do.

Suddenly I heard a strange weeping and shouting out in the

street. Keeping my composure, I went out, walked over to a group of people and questioned them and received the news that today all the workers of all the artels, along with their families, were to be removed. My head felt as though it had been struck by lightning. I did not know what to do or how to advise my parents about leaving, for we were quite frightened by reports of what had been done in other cities.

The workers and their families would be removed and those of us who were left would all be shot... That was the kind oftalkwe were hearing. Everyone remained numb with fear, not knowing what to do or what the best course of action would be. How could we depart, knowing that on the very next day we would have no source of nutrition? While in this place we at least get something to eat, but if we go to the Ghetto in Iwieniec death by starvation is a certainty. Now everyone is packing. The gendarmes and two policemen from Iwieniec are going from house to house tormenting everyone, beating people.

At one moment I see from the window a frail Jew making his way laboriously to the marketplace with a bundle on his back. A policemanfrom Iwieniec comes along and begins throwing large stones at the man's head. The man falls, barely succeeds in getting up; he is half dead. Sad, indescribable scenes. There is nowhere to hide. And now it seems they are on their way to our place. But, G-d be thanked, they go by without entering. And there, off at a distance, stand a group of gentiles enjoying watching the streams of our blood flow in the streets.

It is not long before the train of wagons begins moving. In the marketplace the poor, frail Jews are standing with their little children, waiting to be given permission to place their bundles on the wagons. And now the wagons are being loaded and the people are lined up by threes: mothers with tiny infants in their arms, crippled and hungry, beaten, bloody. Some children are left working in the silo, having gone there in the morning without any inkling of what the latter part of the day would bring.

Those who are not going sit hidden, their thoughts occupied with the expectation of death. There is no other way out.

It was twelve o'clock by the time they started out. Everyone was on foot: Only packages were on the wagons. Broken-hearted, we said farewell to our neighbors who were leaving and to Aunt Rokhl, her husband and their children. They cast a last glance at the town and the houses and went off on their long journey to their announced destination far from home, to another, worse Ghetto enclosed by a high fence. Their parting thought was the hope that those they were leaving behind would not be shot. We had always lived close to each other, sharing our lives. And now they are no longer among us.

The mood of the town has become sad and depressed. Now, one finds emptiness and devastation wherever one goes. The broken tables and chairs, the deserted walls seem to be weeping over our catastrophe, and there is no one to comprehend the meaning of their mourning or to see the ruin and the desolation in the house.

Those who went away are walking the long road through open fields and woods teeming with life but their eyes express nothing but emptiness, forlornness and unhappiness. With broken, reluctant hearts they parted with everything, leaving deep sorrow and tragedy in every corner. And when they arrive in that other city at night, they will have neither their homes nor their beds. With wanderstaff in hand, without a home and without a land.

How much harder my heart beats tonight when I go outdoors and try to soak in the freshness of the clean air. In a very few days, when I shall be lying in a heap of dead, of what use will the fresh air be to me? During these final days I want at least to satiate myself with the lovely, vibrant evenings. Today my eyes can still observe everything, but in a few days I shall no longer have the desire and the craving to look at nature still alive and stirring. The quiet and the mournfulness, today's occurrence, frighten me, as does the morrow which awaits me: the regrettable sad end with all the scenes of this morning, the parting from the beautiful, warm springandfrom my youthfullife.

Scenes depicting the approaching steps of death, scenes of resentment and hatred: These are all in everyone's mind now upon going outdoors in the evening just as the sun is about to set. It seems to me it is setting as though forever, that it will never shine forth anew, that it will never again summon us to life, that all will be ended for us, the enslaved. Mortal fear engulfs me at the thought, not only for myself but for all those inhabitants of our Ghetto who remain.

Now something else presents itself. It suddenly appears to me I have just caught sight of an entire group of forsaken people. I had been looking in the same direction just moments before and had apparently seen nothing. Could my eyes have been veiled in thick stripes of darkness, seeing and not wanting to believe, seeing only desolate shadows,not persons? But now I see all clearly. I see nearing me my friend Masha, in tears as she runs from the silo with all the other children who have been left without their parents. They run into their homes and find no one there, nothing but a void. Instantly they become aware of the desertedness, the loneliness; the bare walls seem mournful. Each child feels as though it has just been born of a stone or been left like a solitary, searching lamb far from its flock andits shepherd.

There is no consolation. No one thought, upon leaving at dawn today for the silo, that there would be such an unexpected change upon returning. Igo in to Masha's and find herin a river of tears. Unable to comfort her, I cry as long as she does. Nothing can part us, my best friend, not even our parting, which will take place tomorrow. I cannot imagine saying farewell to you and our being left without each other, never to see each other again.

"Don't cry," everyone calls to her. "You, dear friend, can look forward to life. Life awaits you; we face death." I am parting with you forever and ever. I can neither calm nor control myself to be indifferent to the fact, and can think only of the sad reality and the fate which leaves me behind without you. I look at you for a long,long time, as though to satisfy myself forever,

to remember your presence. By tomorrow afternoon it will serve as my way of recalling you.

I just cannot leave her to go home, but it does get late and, much broken in spirit, I go from her and walk home wearily to go to bed. Our Friday, always so happy before these Ghetto days, has been ruined and filled with pain. All night long the bitter tears flow from deep in my heart on account of this day's events, the like of which have spoiled not only today but all our days, and now even more so. We were not really aware how good things were when we were together, so G-d made things worse for us, yet we still must say that G-d is just and his verdict is just. ["Got is gerekht un sayn mishpet is gerekht." With that thought in mind I fall asleep at once, aware that my broken heart was beating extra hard because of my weariness. Night, night has fallen...

Saturday, 9th May 1942
At 9 O'clock Today Masha and All the Other Children
Remaining in Our Ghetto Departed for Iwieniec

I cannot begin to state and cannot comprehend that I will soon be obliged to part with you, faithful Masha. I cannot accept the fact that I shall never again see you, dear friend. No! Probably this is all just a morning dream, and I am shaking with fright in my dream and crying. And now you are about to depart from me and from the town of your birth, and you will no longer be among us. I awaken with a start and see that it has only just begun to dawn. The lovely summer morning was just beginning to unroll slowly and I watched it all with great antipathy, sadness

and concern. Then came the heartbreaking thought that on this beautiful morning illumined by splendid summer sunbeams I shall soon have to go down into the courtyard to you and, indeed, consider myself fortunate to see you and sit on the same bench with you for the last time, best friend, hear your voice for the last time and your broken sobbing, feel your pain, which is joined to everyone else's suffering. I shall still see you in your house --I shall no longer have anyone to go to there--where you and I often would sit and talk, comfort each other, tell things and complain, recall and have questions about the good times we experienced together during the childhood days of our past. I go on thinking and rivers of tears pour from my tortured eyes, tears of true, inwardly felt friendship which choke me and say that our parting is at hand. Just as soon as the wagon draws nearer we shall be on two separate roads. We shall be casting our glances far in an effort to see each other, but in vain....

No! Our hearts will sense our friendship and our love, they will become still more intertwined by even stronger threads of devotion and they will feel the loss and will prize highly those moments when we sat together in the locked Ghetto on quiet winter evenings, pouring our hearts out to each other about what troubled us most.

Oh, how I miss you when I think that even this evening we shall not see each other! I will go in and you will nolonger be sitting at the table with your book; the table will be standing there alone and deserted and will no longerbe graced by your

presence beside it. Is that really how it will be? And shall I not see you again? I simply cannot believe it. I do not even want to think about it. Where will you be soon? And we, where shall we be? Shall we still be sitting in our homes, or shall we be at everlasting rest?!...

Reality prompts me to write that it is true that you are about to leave your town, where your entire life was spent, where you were born and where you matured, that soon you will be on your way to your parents, brothers and sisters, that we shall not see each other again.

I continue to sit with you for a long time which passes fast as a minute. I want it to drag on like weeks at least so I can be with you a bit longer. But no, no one hears my inward weeping and imploring:

"Do not rob her from me; do not leave me alone! Why are you taking away my best friend? At least for a few more moments let me fill my eyes with her lovely, attractive appearance." But no one pays any attention. And she wants to join her now even more cherished parents and to share their suffering.

Now the time has come for the wagon to arrive. Masha's packages are already being carried out, and I realize that now we must take leave of each other.

There are no words to describe what I am experiencing as I stand on the threshold of our parting, on the threshold which separates us one from the other, on the threshold upon which we shall never

again stand together.

Before long we embrace each other with fervent, final, pain-filled kisses. These are the last moments of our being together, the last minutes for us to look at each other. I am remaining here with the others, but you are taking leave of everything, of the entire town.

The wagon has been packed and the journey has begun. My heart begins to beat even faster; a feeling of longing for you comes over me immediately, a feeling of pity, and I do not even give a thought to the fact that tomorrow those of us who are here will probably no longer be alive. I continue to look for a long time and still see your movements, see you place one foot after the other in front of you and see your glance from the distance when you turn around and look about as you leave your town and your friends. And now you are almost lost from sight altogether, only your shoulders still showing, and now you are no longer among us, having departed on a distant journey, and I have been left with thoughts I cannot comprehend. What will tomorrow bring? Tomorrow really frightens me. We all feel very threatened by tomorrow.

And now evening has come and I think about stopping in at your place, Masha, of going to your courtyard, and my heart constricts as I recall that you are no longer here, that if I go to your home I will not find you there. I stand beside the gate to your yard for a long time, but you do not come out and do not talk to me. With a feeling of quiet, pain-filled grief I go back home, my thoughts in disarray.

Sunday, 10th May 1942

This day's morning is clear and beautiful. The sun is shining gloriously. For a long time it warms up the earth, so prettily covered with green. There is not even the tiniest breeze. The sun casts its warm rays wide and if they were really shining and warming for us I should count myself fortunate. Yes, you shine, lovely sun, and titillate our dead lives, our forever overcast days, none of which ever really differs from any other except that each is intensified as against the previous one, containing more sadness, more despair and finality. I tremble and write, even though it seems to me that I am getting no direction from my thoughts, which no longer have any clear content, any resolve, any bit of joy in the lovely summer days, any sign of comfort to strengthen my weary brain that is being withered by sorrow. I would gladly describe some happier thought occasionally, should one take hold of me, stealing in unintentionally through the little window of my mind. Unfortunately, however, no such feelings penetrate. There aren't any, and they could not possibly be found in the streets of our Ghetto, so that what is written can only be about the actual thoughts I am now experienc

ing with much apprehension and sorrow and which suggest to me that we are at the end.

Two separate ways of living: A Jew lives, and Nature lives. The animal lives free among the bushes in the wood, and the Jew is alive, too. The little bird lives high in the clear air, soars about, and its road is wide and long, with neither boundary nor restraint. Are any of these lives to be compared with our sad, downtrodden existence? No. There are significant, extensive differences: All growing things live in considerable peace and freedom; many strive towards a goal. Everything moves about freely; only one is confined, and his questioning breath can scarcely be discerned. He is barely vital and hardly able to find nourishment; he can scarcely distinguish the beauty and the brightness of the day and of nature. Who is that? The answer to the strange, puzzling riddle: It is the Jew, the fragile, tortured, plagued Jew, for whom everything has been planned and readied: His tormenters do whatever they want with him. Why? Because he is a Jew.

Today the only roads I see lead into darkness. The day is such a sad one, and the lovely sunbeams do not delight me at all. They arouse in me only displeasure and much loathing for this day that was granted not at all to us but very, very much to others, to everyone but us. This week, which brought with it the many sad events we experienced, much anxiety and uncertainty about our lives, many dead, much grievous, indescribable tragedy, was a time during which I cursed and truly detested the day of my

birth. This week brought so much evil, sadness and darkness, so much daily parting with youthful life! What good is such a life? Why are we so oppressed? And why is there so much hatred towards us from everyone? Of what good is life to us if the days of our youth are dominated by constant thought of death, shooting and massacre, if it is impossible to think about anything else but that, impossible to deviate even a hair's breadth from it? Where are the desire for learning and knowledge? Where, the youthful thoughts concerned with something more exalted than the one topic: finis? There is no youth at all; there is only age, which thinks: "I've now lived seventy--or eighty--years, lived to see joy, and that will suffice. There does come a time when a person must make an end and break away from life." Such are our thoughts during these beautiful days of our youth.

We have no interest in anything whatever. Everything has been stolen from us. What are we left with? Sad thoughts alone, nothing more. Everyone is very downcast all day today, apprehensive that something may happen. May G-d have mercy on us and permit us to live. May He not rob us of life, more precious to us today than ever. I should still like to live long enough to enjoy a bit of happiness in compensation for the hardships we are now undergoing. This is the one consolation which gives us the courageto endure the present terrible events. It braces and encourages us. Perhaps, in consideration of this, Father in Heaven, Thou wilt send us Thy strength and Thy complete salvation.

Wednesday, 13th May 1942 (Rubiezewiczel

Whereare you, all my familiar oppressive thoughts? You have

disappeared and refuse to draw close to me. At what place are you staying? Where is your temporary station? Your firm ground? Who took you from your searching deliberations inside my weary head? You all became alarmed, even thought I had become completely incapable of understanding, describing and remembering you. You thought that everything had just about come to an end, that evil Death had carried off my youthful being, that I was no longer alive, no longer had any ability to move about. You thought I no longer need to think and sigh as I observe everything, and that I no longer need deplore the fact that everything is shining, thriving, developing--for others more fortunate but not for me.

No! You are mistaken. I am still alive, still can think. I see everything, understand all and am still capable of contemplation. I still live and, so far, have not taken leave of you, my dear diary; I continue, everywhere and always, to be in most amicable contact with you, my friend, who hold everything pertaining to my internal being: all the secrets, all the thoughts. How much I long for you when several days pass and I do not come in contact with you, do not talk with you, do not see my beloved pen and clean, lovingly handled paper, do not see your attractive thick binding, do not turn your pages back and forth, tormenting you! Oh, what a strange longing comes over me, what a strange, supernatural power impels me towards you, my pen! At such times no other power can tear me from that impulse, no other tasks command my usually willing attention. I can see nothing but you, my pen and ink and book. I see you and revive myself with reading my

recorded weighty observations, with the clean page that has been filled with my handwriting and painful inward thoughts. Only when I am sitting with you do I cast my glance about, now at the distant horizons, now at the pleasant immediate surroundings. I look and then, with a deep sigh, lower my eyelids, not wishing to see more.

And when I am more deeply absorbed in the writing for a longer time it seems to me that only when I am writing am I able to shed all problems and feel happy. Then I think how fortunate I am that G-d granted me the desire to do this, endowed me with love for the pen and the ability to express everything in writing. In the quiet, illumined hours when I sit writing, spending time with you, sharing all with you, you remain silent and locked away to all others. You exist for me alone, you are joined to me only, only for me do you live and me do you serve. And the same is true of me with regard to you, my pen. I alone accumulate true materials to describe, characterize and formulate for you, and I gather together the thoughts which sometimes burden me so and will not go away.

I did not think, last Sabbath day, that we would still be alive today. During the night hours, while I slept, I did not dream that we would still be alive today to see everything, to feel our suffering and our anguish, or that I would still be writing. I now consider myself fortunate just to have lived through another day and to be able to listen to the beat of my heart and pulse. And I am alive now, during these fine May days, when

beautiful nature is also alive. The birch woods whisper from a distance. The little birds sing their quiet, melodic songs of praise and soar in the clear air. The little river runs along quietly without any murmuring or any noisy waves. The rested fields are being sown. Everything is so magnificent, all of nature so full of life and so delightful. Unmoved by our situation, it goes on living, budding, developing, changing color.

How much my heart is rejuvenated when the lovely colors of the sky and the earth combine to create so much splendid pleasure for mankind and everything sends out a call to life: the river, the hills and the valleys, the trees in full bloom! Only our freedom remains silent and distant, refusing to join us and thus truly gladden everyone. It will not walk hand in hand with us, the people who are living a dismal, restricted life deprived of precious freedom and who must witness all this, make sense of it and not complain.

I should gladly step right along with you, beauteous Nature. I should gladly grow and have some goal, gladly bring change into human life or become a quiet little bird flitting freely about in the air and soaring above the trees in the open woods. Gladly would I fly off to where you, dearest sister, are living. I would bring you news of all of us and then fly back to my nest. For the life of man is hard, filled as it is with suffering. And even more difficult is the life of the Jew, the unpitied Jew fettered by the wrath of others.

Yes, it is difficult and terribly sad to be obliged to live under

such conditions, ever apprehensive of news so horrible it shatters our minds. It is difficult to survive such things, difficult to look the end of life directly in the eye, difficult to get through these lovely days of our youth, days which yield us nothing. And time runs on and will not wait. It maintains its swift pace and sometimes brings hours filled with experiences difficult to survive, filled with fear, torture, sadness and the awareness of deteriorating conditions for the very few Jews who are left, and of their decimation. There is no road that will lead to any amelioration or make our bitter life easier....

Thursday, 14th May 1942

I am looking for an idea that would provide an escape for my weary and tormented mind, for a fantasy to at least help me forget about the present time. I am searching for the feeling, strayed far and stolen from me, which would strengthen and console me during the quiet morning sunrises, when dawn is just about to begin and the splendid long-lasting day is approaching, when everyone is still submerged in delicious, peaceful, before-daylight sleep and dreaming dreams which to the suffering Jew seem as real as the lovely, radiant spring day which is advancing but is still a distance away.

It is during those early morning sunrises, when the quiet grayish night is fading so slowly, when all is at rest and anticipating something gladdening, that the dispiriting, depressing thoughts come to torture, torture until tears. Persistent, deep-seated, deeply rooted feelings which will neither be quieted nor take on

a happier tone envelop my weary mind. At such times my inner being feels as though it were in the grip of an iron vise which restrains it from seeking other, firmer ground, enabling me to drive all these sadnesses away from me. I would banish them and have them come to a halt among those determined to do us harm, causing them to wrestle with thoughts of refraining from carrying out their evil deeds against us.

May truly human feelings come to those persons, imbuing them with considerateness, compasssion and mercy. And may a happier mood conquer and stamp out my ever-present, ingrained, deplorable awareness of evil, tear all of that up by the roots and eradicate it from each and every little chamber of my heart, so that I am no longer reminded of it.

May the good feeling in my young heart thrive and invest itself with much additional joy and the compassion to help that part of humanity which is suffering. May I be inspired to stride forth with and lead the unfortunate out from the incomprehensible life of suffering into which they have sunk, to teach them to carry on a constant struggle with whatever is undesirable in their own characters and to foster many good, refined qualities within themselves. That would be what I would like best, to ascend to the attractive level of the better part of humanity,which labors and creates not for itself alone, for the benefit of its own ego.

I do not desire to unite with those who strive for their own good, but with people who also live for others, for the unfortunate, and keep them from falling into the pit and drowning in a

deep morass of suffering from which there is no lifting them. I should like to find a person who would be in harmony with my character and my feelings, one from whom, also, I should be able to learn much that is worthwhile. Ah! How my heart yearns for such a one as could quench my long, exhausting thirst for the opportunity to be faithful to such a course, to such a way of living together! And if after much exploration of this need he proves to be contrarily disposed, I should scrupulously avoid being in his company.

Sometimes, however, the youthful heart asks no questions and refuses to stop and consider, does not care to know whether his character is good or bad but sees only the handsome exterior form which is so dazzling one is oblivious of everything except the pleasure of being with him. Yes, such cases occur very frequently, for one is only a young human being, possessed of and responding to youthful attractiveness, and one gives no thought to the future and how a life of this sort can affect the family. At the moment one does not think of that; one sees only his tenderness, his physical presence and love. One is tortured by instinctive natural passion, which one must be able to keep from yielding to the grossness demanded by nature following the encounter of the sexes after those happy days [when two young people are] forming a bond with each other. So long as one can still turn away from the other or have a change of heart there should be no trust, not until after the moment they agree to belong to each other, the moment both can finally be free to say they are friends for life and prepared to help and cherish each

other.

Yes, love and youth are two themes which contain much that is hidden, which combine and go together, two happy stages in life. One cannot forget them as long as one lives and they are often mentioned during our present youthful moments. It is all very beautiful but not for us to think about, much less describe, at this time, for it simply creates more pain when we probe into it and concentrate on portraying it. Therefore, I shall not do so now. Let things continue to go as they are going, so that I am not perturbed by questioning thoughts, for I feel that would cause me much pain and suffering...

Saturday, 16th May 1942. (Rubieżewicze)

A Week Today that Masha Is in Iwieniec

Denver, Colorado, America. The 5th of June--1950

My hands tremble and I am dizzy as I take my pen in my hand and write on this paper, in your diary, where you recorded the days of your life as they passed, where you recorded your joy and your